THE PETERBOROUGH ANTHOLOGY

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THE PETERBOROUGH ANTHOLOGY

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The Peterborough Anthology

Being a Selection from the Work of the Poets who have been members of The MacDowell Colony

Compiled and With an Introduction by

JEAN WRIGHT GORMAN *and*
HERBERT S. GORMAN

Price $2.00

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HILLCREST

(*To Mrs. Edward MacDowell*)

No sound of any storm that shakes
Old island walls with older seas
Comes here where now September makes
An island in a sea of trees.

Between the sunlight and the shade
A man may learn till he forgets
The roaring of a world remade,
And all his ruins and regrets;

And if he still remembers here
Poor fights he may have won or lost,—
If he be ridden with the fear
Of what some other fight may cost,—

If, eager to confuse too soon,
What he has known with what may be,
He reads a planet out of tune
For cause of his jarred harmony,—

If here he venture to unroll
His index of adagios,
And he be given to console
Humanity with what he knows,—

He may by contemplation learn
A little more than what he knew,
And even see great oaks return
To acorns out of which they grew.

HILLCREST

He may, if he but listen well,
Through twilight and the silence here,
Be told what there are none may tell
To vanity's impatient ear;

And he may never dare again
Say what awaits him, or be sure
What sunlit labyrinth of pain
He may not enter and endure.

Who knows to-day from yesterday
May learn to count no thing too strange:
Love builds of what Time takes away,
Till Death itself is less than Change.

Who sees enough in his duress
May go as far as dreams have gone;
Who sees a little may do less
Than many who are blind have done;

Who sees unchastened here the soul
Triumphant has no other sight
Than has a child who sees the whole
World radiant with his own delight.

Far journeys and hard wandering
Await him in whose crude surmise
Peace, like a mask, hides everything
That is and has been from his eyes;

And all his wisdom is unfound,
Or like a web that error weaves
On airy looms that have a sound
No louder now than falling leaves.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

INTRODUCTION

THERE can be no question but what there remains in certain quarters an ignorance of the purpose which the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire, is designed to fulfill. This lack of knowledge extends even to the type of artist who goes there to work during the summer months. The quality and achievements of these artists, the fact that they are not, except in a few cases, beginners, should be made amply manifest by this Anthology. The names to be found here include some of the finest of our contemporary poets and the work, quite apart from its relation to the MacDowell Colony, is of sufficient importance (in our opinion) and carries enough weight by itself to justify the book. However, the ostensible purpose of The Peterborough Anthology is to illustrate by necessarily limited selection the class of poet who avails himself (or herself) of the quietude and admirable facilities afforded by the Colony to serious writers. The diverse affiliations of the poets should be apparent to all. They touch all schools and movements from the extremely modern free verse of Maxwell Bodenheim to the distinguished conservatism of Hermann Hagedorn. Even nationalistic lines are crossed as the names of Padraic Colum and Jules Bois will prove. The MacDowell Colony is in no sense of the word a group, a cult, or a limited undertaking that may be bounded as a movement. Peterborough stands for one thing only:—a place where any creator may work at his own labors without interruption and with that physical and mental comfort that are best calculated to bring out all his power.

In a volume that is limited in scope, that presents but one aspect of a many-sided undertaking, it is obvious that the view afforded will be one-sided. Here are but the poets who have worked at the MacDowell Colony and left out are the novelists, the essayists, the composers, the painters, and the sculptors. It will naturally occur to any one who reads this book why this is so. The poets could be represented in a single volume with a greater degree of ease than any of their

kindred workers at Peterborough. It is not so easy to compile an album of musical compositions or of reproductions of paintings or even of well-selected and harmonizing prose extracts although it is the desire of the editors of this book that such admirable adventures be attempted sooner or later.

A brief outline of what the MacDowell Colony is and what it aims to provide for creative workers in the various arts may be of some value to readers. Although the artist suddenly flares into being from the most unlikely environment, there can be no doubt that to perfect and fitly to express himself he must have leisure and a guard from the thousand petty distractions that crop up about him in a country where, in the past at least, the development of art has been a matter of secondary importance. He must get away from the roar of "L's," the crashing of automobiles and the multitudinous discords of great cities, with their futile obligations and interruptions. Quietude must surround him if he is to succeed in realizing in marble, music, paint or words the subtle divagations of the human soul. He must find that high and still place where the hurrying footfalls of the busy days beat afar off, where in the peace and serenity so invaluable to his unobstructed self-expression he may conceive, mold, labor over and finish as they should be finished those intellectual things that are to be the heritage of to-morrow. He cannôt do these things in a hot and cramping hall bedroom; neither can he do them as they should be done in a studio that reechoes the snarl and jangle of the city. He must go away, but he does not possess enough money to carry him to the proper haven. The American writer or painter or composer or sculptor who is young, who has made but little money, but who yet has given distinctive promise and shown unplumbed potentialities, has but few resources. He may secure a patron, but it is unlikely in a country where earning capacity is admired vastly more than creative ability. He may leave the country, but he is liable to die of starvation in a foreign country or pass all his days struggling to pay his bills. He may putter on disconsolately enough in the unfriendly city, where the August days and nights wrap about him like a sticky blanket. Or he may secure admission to the MacDowell Colony and, bewilderingly enough at first, enjoy the

untrammeled feeling of long, cool days among deep green trees, where in uninterrupted leisure he may work wholeheartedly at his particular art, giving the best that is in him and discovering to his intense satisfaction that he is doing the finest things in his career.

The MacDowell Colony is not in any sense of the word an institution. It does not give everything for nothing, although it does give everything at a surprisingly low rate, one low enough to admit creative artists in the humblest circumstances. It is not a refuge for superannuated poetasters or a home for indigent musicians. It is not a subsidized organization, except for a small endowment. It is not an experiment, for it is an assured and reasonable practicality. Neither is it a dream, except in so far that it is the actual realization of a glorious vision. It is not an artists' community where the worker is interrupted all day long with endless arguments on theories and methods. It is not a place for social life or vacations; indeed, it is a place where the artist will work harder than ever before, so compelling is the atmosphere of concentration. It is not a memorial, for life is too vital and contemporary there.

The germ of the MacDowell Colony was the old farm at Peterborough, New Hampshire, that Edward MacDowell, the composer, purchased in 1895. There, in the woods, he built for himself a log cabin, and in that cabin, which still stands, shutting out the whole world, he did the larger part of his ablest work. It was his hope that other workers in the arts, not necessarily musical composers, might enjoy the same privileges of quietude and peace, and it is the realization of that hope that meets the eye of the visitor today. A score of studios, beautifully built, each one with its fire-place for chilly days, are scattered over a tract of land that is much larger now than the original farm. Each studio is an oasis by itself, hidden from the others, masked by green woodland from neighbors. The worker sees nothing but the sky overhead and the varying emerald of trees on all sides. No sounds reach him but the animated arguments of birds and the winds in the shrubberies. There is a central building known as Colony Hall, from which the workers depart each morning for their respective studios. All day they remain

secluded, wrapped up in their endeavors. Lunch is left for them on their doorsteps. No one calls upon them, except by special invitation. The long, clear day is all their own, to compose their music in, to paint their pictures, to write their dramas and poems and novels. The blue summit of Mt. Monadnock looks calmly down on these busy people.

The impression must not be given that days at the MacDowell Colony are all hard work from very beginning until bedtime, for even the artist, unwearying laborer that he is, could hardly stand that pace. Shortly after 4 o'clock in the afternoon the studios are left behind, writers and composers gather at Colony Hall, and there is dinner and general conversation. It is quiet talk, for the most part about things in general. Soon the clear air and simple life manifest their omnipotence, and it is early, indeed, that the workers wander off to bed.

Care is taken in admitting colonists. The poet who would enter must be vouched for as a man or woman of authentic promise by two recognized poets of standing—and so on through the other arts. In no sense of the word is the MacDowell Colony a philanthropic enterprise for penniless writers. It is a place for talent, and the low fees might be regarded as the tuition paid much the same as a college student pays. If the artist has done something or gives indubitable promise of doing something, he deserves a place where he can work at top speed, with the necessary fresh air, sound sleep and unhampered days. This is the ideal of the MacDowell Colony, and it is now an ideal that has been made a practicality.

The selections in this book are in all cases the result of the judgment of the editors. Whether or not these poems are representative of the authors must be established by readers. The editors think they are. No particular method was observed in compiling the book except, when possible, to obtain poems that were actually written at Peterborough. Another rule that was followed, although not in all cases, was to select work that had not already appeared in other anthologies. By doing this it was felt that a fresher and more unique collection would result. But few occasions arose wherein copyright limitations prevented the use of a de-

sired piece. A number of poems, printed from manuscript, appear for the first time.

It is with eagerness and all thanks that the editors acknowledge the aid of many friends, personal and of the MacDowell Colony, who willingly gave both advice and time to further the success of the volume. The publishers and poets are thanked elsewhere in the book. Jay Van Everen, who is responsible for the design on the title-page, was generous with valuable advice. And to such wise friends as Edwin Arlington Robinson, Parker Fillmore, Lewis M. Isaacs, Edith J. R. Isaacs and Belle McDiarmid Ritchey cordial genuflections are made by

JEAN WRIGHT GORMAN
HERBERT S. GORMAN

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JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

The Nightingale Unheard

Yes, Nightingale, through all the summer-time
We followed on, from moon to golden moon;
From where Salerno day-dreams in the noon,
And the far rose of Paestum once did climb.
All the white way beside the girdling blue,
Through sun-shrill vines and campanile chime,
We listened;—from the old year to the new.
Brown bird, and where were you?

You, that Ravello lured not, throned on high
And filled with singing out of sun-burned throats!
Nor yet Minore of the flame-sailed boats;
Nor yet—of all bird-song should glorify—
Assisi, Little Portion of the blest,
Assisi, in the bosom of the sky,
Where God's own singer thatched his sunward nest:
That little, heavenliest!

And north and north, to where the hedge-rows are,
That beckon with white looks an endless way;
Where, through the fair wet silverness of May,
A lamb shines out as sudden as a star,
Among the cloudy sheep; and green, and pale,

The may-trees reach and glimmer, near or far,
And the red may-trees wear a shining veil.
—And still, no nightingale!

The one vain longing,—through all journeyings,
The one: in every hushed and harkening spot,—
All the soft-swarming dark where you were not,
Still longed for! Yes, for sake of dreams and wings,
And wonders, that your own must ever make
To bower you close, with all hearts' treasurings;
And for that speech toward which all hearts do ache;—
Even for Music's sake.

But most, his music whose beloved name
Forever writ in water of bright tears,
Wins to one grave-side even the Roman years,
That kindle there the hallowed April flame
Of comfort-breathing violets. By that shrine
Of Youth, Love, Death, forevermore the same,
Violets still!—When falls, to leave no sign,
The arch of Constantine.

Most for his sake we dreamed. Tho' not as he,
From that lone spirit, brimmed with human woe,
Your song once shook to surging overflow.
How was it, sovran dweller of the tree,
His cry, still throbbing in the flooded shell
Of silence with remembered melody,
Could draw from you no answer to the spell?
—O voice, O Philomel?

Long time we wondered (and we knew not why):—
Nor dream, nor prayer, of wayside gladness born,
Nor vineyards waiting, nor reproachful thorn,
Nor yet the nested hill-towns set so high
All the white way beside the girdling blue,—
Nor olives, gray against a golden sky,
Could serve to wake that rapturous voice of you!
But the wise silence knew.

O Nightingale unheard!—Unheard alone,
Throughout that woven music of the days
From the faint sea-rim to the market-place,
And ring of hammers on cathedral stone!—
So be it, better so: that there should fail
For sun-filled ones, one blessed thing unknown.
To them, be hid forever,—and all hail!
Sing never, Nightingale.

Sing, for the others! Sing; to some pale cheek
Against the window, like a starving flower.
Loose, with your singing, one poor pilgrim hour
Of journey, with some Heart's Desire to seek.
Loose, with your singing, captives such as these
In misery and iron, hearts too meek,
For voyage—voyage over dreamful seas
To lost Hesperides.

Sing not for free-men. Ah, but sing for whom
The walls shut in; and even as eyes that fade,
The windows take no heed of light nor shade,—
The leaves are lost in mutterings of the loom.
Sing near! So in that golden overflowing

They may forget their wasted human bloom;
Pay the devouring days their all, unknowing,—
Reck not of life's bright going!

Sing not for lovers, side by side that hark;
Nor unto parted lovers, save they be
Parted indeed by more than makes the Sea.
Where never hope shall meet—like mounting lark—
Far Joy's uprising; and no memories
Abide to star the music-haunted dark:
To them that sit in darkness, such as these,
Pour down, pour down heart's-ease.

Not in kings' gardens. No; but where there haunt
The world's forgotten, both of men and birds;
The alleys of no hope and of no words,
The hidings where men reap not, though they plant;
But toil and thirst—so dying and so born;—
And toil and thirst to gather to their want,
From the lean waste, beyond the daylight's scorn,
—To gather grapes of thorn!

. . . . . .

And for those two, your pilgrims without tears,
Who prayed a largess where there was no dearth,
Forgive it to their human-happy ears:
Forgive it them, brown music of the Earth,
Unknowing,—though the wiser silence knew!
Forgive it to the music of the spheres
That while they walked together so, the Two
Together,—heard not you.

JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

The Long Lane

All through the summer night, down the long lane in flower,
The moon-white lane,
All through the summer night,—dim as a shower,
Glimmer and fade the Twain:
Over the cricket hosts, throbbing the hour by hour,
Young voices bloom and wane.

Down the long lane they go, and past one window, pale
With visions silver-blurred;
Stirring the heart that waits,—the eyes that fail
After a spring deferred.
Query, and hush, and Ah!—dim through a moon-lit veil,
The same one word.

Down the long lane, entwined with all the fragrance there;
The lane in flower somehow
With youth, and plighted hands, and star-strewn air,
And muted 'Thee' and 'Thou':—
All the wild bloom and reach of dreams that never were,
—Never to be, now.

So, in the throbbing dark, where ebbs the old refrain,
A starved heart hears.
And silver-bright, and silver-blurred again
With moonlight and with tears.
All the long night they go, down the long summer lane,
The long, long years.

Jongleur

Ah, ye that loved my laughter once,
    Open to me! 'Tis I
That shed you songs like summer leaves
    Whenever a wind came by.
The leaves are spent and the year is old,
And the fields are gray that once were gold.
Heart of the brook, my heart is cold—
    My song is like to die.

The windows look another way,
    The walls are deaf and stark.
Who heeds a glow-worm in the day,
    Or lifts a frozen lark?
Warm yourself with the days that were;
Follow the summer, beg of her,
But never sadden us, Jongleur,
    Jongleur, go down the dark!

The Stay-at-Home

I have waited, I have longed—
    I have longed as none can know,
All my spring and summer time,
    For this day to come and go;
And the foolish heart was mine,
    Dreaming I would see them shine,—
Harlequin and Columbine
And Pierrot!

Now the laughing has gone by,
    On the highway from the inn;
And the dust has settled down,
    And the house is dead within.
And I stay—who never go—
Looking out upon the snow,
Columbine and Pierrot
And Harlequin!

All the rainbow things you see
    Understream are not so fine;
And their voices weave and cling
    Like my honeysuckle vine,
Lovely as a Violin!—
Mellow gold and silver-thin:
Pierrot and Harlequin
And Columbine!

Oh, the people that have seen,
    They forget that it was so!
They, who never stay at home,
    Say, "'Tis nothing but a show."
—And I keep the passion in:
And I bide; and I spin.
Columbine . . . Harlequin
. . . *Pierrot!*

HERVEY ALLEN

Funeral at High Tide

The Earth must breathe by hours:
In these lungs of marshes she inhales the tide,
Alive and deeply breathing in her sleep,
Long draughts of heavy water from the sea;
Her arching chest fills slowly with the flood
'Till spear-tops of flat grasses lie awash;
Shoals drown to shallow glimmers where the wind
Ripples like small rain-patches in a shower.
Islands and bays brim level;
And white houses stand
Inland upon the islands, low,
As if the water's crest
Rose higher than the banks.

Then comes a while of shimmering calm,
Earth's water-glutted dream,
A hot siesta, full of half-mirage
That lifts white dunes above the warping beach;
Long green reflections blend with yellow lights
Among reflected pines;
Black waters blister underneath the sun;
And far, straight channels of the flooded marsh,
Like old canals of silted cities

Lined with palm trees, stretch
Bright avenues of molten lead
To the horizon's end, where water banks
Like oval liquid on a full cup's brim,—

The Tide is coming in.

On such a rising tide in deep July
We lie a-fishing, in an awninged boat;
The Sun is clanging on the molten bay
Like giant hammers on half-liquid metal,
'Till the gas-blue vault above
Quivers and rings with heat.
Not for a second dare you catch his eye,
A dazzling furnace door
That opens on a fiery place
Behind the tile-wall of the light.
The white-hot tears run down the cheeks of day.
Fat Earth lies with her face up to the Sun,
Filling her lungs to the last water-breath,
While small waves trace on highest sand
A spiritual lace of broken kelp.
Time comes to rest,
And for a space—inflated—with her bosom arched,
And still as swollen death,
The huge World breathes no more.

It is high tide.

Now while the world of insects hums
Against the faint, despairing pipe of birds,
We set our lines.
The negro pilot sprawls along the thwart,
Eyes covered with a rag, brow-sweating from the sun.
The boys plunge in to swim, quick,
Darting like young seals;
And then slip out to drip
Like little Adams in the tangent heat
That thuds hot hands upon the cracking roof.
Inland we watch a funeral,
Which crawls along the roads.
The dark heads slide like beads
Along the tops of hedges to a whitewashed church
Whose five thin pillars lie,
Caught on the tin-white mirror of a cove
In widened lines upon a flooded shoal
Like quivering strings upon the bridge
Of drum-flat, wire-strung instrument.
Look, in the churchyard wilderness beyond,
Where gray-white head-boards stray
Like sheep without a dog,
There yawns a yellow pit
That, is the long procession's goal,
For there they gather in black patches
On the spattered sand,
As if the ants had found a thing to eat.

It is slack tide.

Just as the sullen water moils in flux,
Hanging between the income and the ebb,
Surges a voice in prayer
That strives to sweep the land and sea away.
We can not hear the words,
But rocking cadences intone
Across the wrinkled water
Sinking to withered bass-chants of despair—
Then—like a letter filled with news of death
That comes as unexpected on a peaceful night
As winter thunder to these island homes—
The yapping, keening cries of mourners fall,
"Oh God! Oh! Jee-*sus!*"
And bodkin stabs of widows' shrieks, stiletto-short,
Rend the dead picture of the sea and sky.
"Oh God! Oh! Jee-*sus!*"
With a low sound of spades and thunder,
Marl on thudding wood, and nothing under—
Rolls the intolerable prayer—
Screams, barks, and singing pitched in high despair—
A long stillness follows, hot and sick . . .

The tide has turned.

The Earth begins to breathe again;
And all the level floor of water slides
Backward and backward to the daylight moon,
With sighs from marshes, clucks from birds,
A cupping sound from hollow banks,
Where muddy bubbles plop their scummy lips,

And the unholy fiddlers sit in cavern doors
To brandish fists, whetting their claws for corpses
With Satanic glee, as if they knew
That everybody's going to die.
"Oh God! Oh! Jee-*sus!*"
Growing fainter now down swampy lanes—
The boys look at each other with uneasy smiles;
The pilot strips the rag-shade from his eyes
To see the cheerfulness of light;
The incantation of the prayer has ceased and yet—
"Oh! Jee-*sus!*" . . .
Cry out for me you poor black mouths!
For we are brothers
On a spinning den of beasts.
I had a dream of beauty and the Earth
But it is ebbing with the clutching tide.
This cockle-boat points toward the ocean now;
Out to the unplumbed ravin of the sea.
No! No! The Earth is not alive!
She does not breathe!
This water floor is pulled by sun
Or moon—as all of us are drawn,
Clutched in a nerveless, old, untiring hand.
See, what the boys catch on their ugly hooks!
Strange, croaking fishes with utilitarian mouths,
Poor things Earth breeds behind mantillas of her beauty.
Marshes crawl with headless things,
Dragons to break through priestly dreams
Like cries of fire at night.
And there one lad stands laughing,

Poised like young Victory upon the prow—
One instant—plunges in—and then is gone,
Dark waters over him—and bubbles . . .
Is that all?

The tide is going out.

Let us return:
There will be comfort in the meal tonight,
In candle light,
And in the unsuspecting faces
'Round the tables at the childish games,
Checkers, and little colored disks
That move in blessed worlds of man-made certainties;
Peace, when the children's faces fall in sleep,
Into prophetic masks of time-to-come,
When, like the night,
The silent answer of the darkness comes.
Come, let us weigh the anchor and go home.

Black Roses

"For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the Milk of Paradise"

His hard-horn eyes
Glitter with pictures
Of the cloud-piled skies;
Wide eyes that little limn
Heaven, unseen by him;
Beside the river road to hell
The dream slave lies.

Here where the swart demons go,
Pass and repass to and fro,
Tread very soft—speak low.

Shrill are the dog-voiced winds
And shrill,
Straining through cedars
At the mouth of hell,
An eyeless socket in the hill;
And the dark river slips,
Sucked through red granite lips,
Into low moonless halls
Down to a cavern land it falls;
Spills with black, lightless thunder,
Where darkness crouches on the dragon hills
An earth-mile under.

Backward, flung back upon the humid winds
Stumbles the mile-deep thunder;

Out of the earth is born
As haggard as a shout from solitude,
The dampened, copper clamor of a horn.
Near here no farmer plants the kindly corn!
Only the sodden dreamer hears the sound
Of the infernal horns bray underground,
While fitfully comes,
Rumbled like trundled drums,
The river's voice,
The mile-deep thunder—
Speak very soft, speak low;
This is a place of wonder!

Tread very soft—tread slow—

For here black roses grow
In ground unholy,
Flowers of darkness
That have sought the light,
One blue-leafed seedling
From the world below
Of night and shadowy trees and voiceless birds,
Of vast, dim meadows and of monstrous herds—
Petals of midnight which are come
To prophecy against the sun,
With seed pods dangerous to all things bright,
Dull blossoms from the tree of melancholy.

Lean very low—lean low

To hear from dreamer's lips
How fiendishly appears
A webb-foot being at the mouth of hell
To prune the ebon rose with leaden shears;
And how that demon strews
Jet petals round the dreamer once, and twice
Cupped like the sloughed scales of an asp,
And bears the dreamer's soul down cavern roads,
Cold, in a damp-smooth clasp.

He bears the dreamer's soul asleep;
He bears the swarthy roses deep—

Deep down the pounding cataracts,
Along the river hurled
Through leafless tracts
Within a starless world,
Into a city drowned
With shadows drooping down
From balconies of blindness
In a murky town.

Signals of flapping blackness float
In folds of darkness from the walls,
And a gigantic watchman rests
His bony hands upon a drum,
Waiting for sunrise that will never come;
The eyeless serpents rustle in the moat;
And silence calls.

Then where the dead waters flow
Down to the last pit below

There is a noise of boulder stones,
Cast up by blurting fountains;
Washed down the cataracts with grumbling tones,
That rumble dismally among the subterranean mountains.
And down the crags
Along whose face
The grey clouds hang
Like rags in space—
The cowled dreams sit
And listen to the thunder, thunder, thunder
Of the black river and the stones.

Tread very soft—speak low.

This is a place of wonder.

HERVEY ALLEN

Walls

The wall of his environment,
Altho' Chinese, was not so high
He could not see tiled roofs of kings
Like dragon backs against the sky.
And so, spurred on by discontent,
An eagle pen that lent him wings
Transported him across the wall
To tea in gardens with the Mings.

Thus staged, his long but static fall
Made drama for ancestral ghosts,
Whose proud transgressions raised the wall
Of ego, which with echoed boasts
Had in past epochs starved their souls
With windy oats of self-applause;
Till they had met great grandpapas
Twit-tittering on the seething coals.

KATHARINE ADAMS

A Shepherd of Thessaly

At listless twilight once a shepherd cried,
The sky paled mistily to frightened primrose grey,
And quick as love a chariot of fire
Flashed through the angry clouds and passed away.

That night a group of half-clad men
Wrangled in wanton churlishness and came
And stood there in the tufted meadow-grass
And muttered of the chariot of flame.

A stranger stood before them with the grace
Of all that beauty covets shining in his face;
Light as the breath of flowers,
Strong as a sword,
Lovely as the first frail message of a star,
He, Apollo whom the gods adored,
Punished by Jupiter, sent from afar.

Bereft of all his golden fire, he smiled,
Holding his hands out in the starshine dim. . . .
He was no god now, just a shepherd lad.
There was no love in any shepherd's eyes to answer
him.

But as the sweet days passed, the simple sheep
Followed along the sunny way he led,
And he would bring his wonder-songs to them,
Lying in the scented grasses as they fed.

And then at last his comrades wild
Used to come in ragged groups to listen to his lyre,
And to their hearts came love as comes a child,
And from their hearts went hate and bitterness and
fire.

He sang to them and all the sheep
Stirred and listened in their sleep.

"I am a singer of songs,
Lilts of the mountains blue,
Tales of the gods' gold play-time,
Ballads of sun and dew,

Lyrics of odd enchantment,
Carols that charm and croon
Of whispering leaves at dawning,
And of flowers making love to the moon."

At listless twilight once a shepherd cried,
The sky paled mistily to frightened, primrose grey,
And quick as love a chariot of fire
Dipped to the earth, and twilight seemed as day.

And shepherd men called harshly in their pain,
The bleat of lambkins shuddered to the sky

As in his chariot the God of Sun
Turned and waved a smiling last goodbye.

Sometimes today when noon is warm with gold,
Those who guard the sheep have fancied they saw fire;
Sometimes at night when heather-bells are still—
Who knows?—perhaps there is the music of a lyre.

La Foi

The branches of the trees are bending close above,
They have so sheltered us all day,
For we have travelled far since dawn,
Little Marcelle, Jean-Paul and I.
The flames were red and gold that swept
Our grey-roofed home,
They mingled with the sweetness of the sky.
Our play-house and our treasure
All were burned away,
And then we called our mother's name,
Down blood-strewn streets and smoke-filled lanes
We called to her
Until we came to a road-way cool and green,
And with the children tugging at my hands
I knew I must go on.
They are so young but I—
I am just fifteen.
We have come safely through wood-paths of dim gold
And where the fronds of ferns unfold

We gathered mists of flowers,
And by a shadowed silver pool
We rested for awhile.
Little Marcelle laughed to see her white feet gleaming;
And through the fragrant afternoon
I knew our mother would come after us.
At twilight time we reached a road
And far away from whence we came
I saw a black mass moving against a violet sky,
As though an army were advancing,
And the same fear that I had known at dawn
In my home town,
Came close to me.
Then I looked up and saw one star—
And so I knew there was no fear.
So I have brought the children to this wood
And we shall sleep here all the night;
Christ has so guided us all day;
Protecting trees and flowers are all around;
The children lie each side of me,
I have unloosed my hair
And its gold gleaming covers them
And shines in the dim greenness;
My arms are flung each side of me
Upon the moss;
I see a far blue star
High through the tree-tops,
It is the star that told me Christ is near.
We are all children, flowers and stars and trees,
It is so joyous to rest here
In the shimmering silence
Of the night.

KATHARINE ADAMS

Because Sometimes When Fragile Jewelled Mist

Because sometimes when fragile jewelled mist
At twilight makes a fairy cover for the sea,
And ships are far slow-moving phantoms of delight
So surely do I know you think of me.
And when a vagrant star in midnight play
To other flowers of gold is tossed, far flung
Across the magic blue of deepest night
Then echoes come of songs that you have sung.
Because I know wherever beauty lives,
In flower, on sea, through light or shade or flame,
As surely as the day wanes always into night,
With quietness and prayer you speak my name.
I shall have peace for beauty knows no fear,
Keeping us, though seas divide, forever near.

WILLIAM ROSE BENET

The Falconer of God

I flung my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
    I shall start a heron soon
    In the marsh beneath the moon—
A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,
    Rising and crying
    Wordless, wondrous things;
    The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings
    The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!"

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
    I heard the mournful loon
    In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then, with feathery thunder, the bird of my desire
    Broke from the cover
    Flashing silver fire.
    High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
    The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stooped upon him, and gript and held him fast.

My soul dropped through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?

Nay! but a piteous freight,
A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled—
All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
Its guise with glory. O bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!
I beat forever
The fens and the sedges.
The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find!

Fire and Glass

The thistly yellow flame flows up like water,
The dusk brick glows.
Fashion the ropelike glass, your lip can blow it
To a vase like a rose,
To a goblet curved like a wave, with a stem like a lily;
Glass can be spun
To frailer lace than the cobweb brown old spiders
Weave in the sun.

Not pure gold ingots nor all the renown of iron
Nor the blushing brand
Nor crackling cataracts of molten metal
Kissing the sand
So praise this cleanly and bewildered fury
Potent to shape
Emerging contours scintillant as diamond,
Smooth as the grape.

O self-consuming sun, the dew-on-the-gossamer's
Delicate glint,
What symmetries petalled and pearled and fragile as flowers
Take form and tint
From the fierce unslakable thirst and famine of fire
Cold stars control;
Even thus, O Love, through the blood's rebuked rebellion,
Thus my soul . . .!

On Edward Webbe, English Gunner

His troublesome travailes

He met the Danske pirates off Tuttee;
Saw the Chrim burn "Musko"; speaks with bated breath
Of his sale to the great Turk, when peril of death
Chained him to oar their galleys on the sea
Until, as gunner, in Persia they set him free
To fight their foes. Of Prester John he saith
Astounding things. But Queen Elizabeth
He worships, and his dear Lord on Calvary.

Quaint is the phrase, ingenuous the wit
Of this great childish seaman in Palestine,
Mocked home through Italy after his release
With threats of the Armada; and all of it
Warms me like firelight jeweling old wine
In some ghost inn hung with the golden fleece!

There Lived a Lady in Milan

There lived a lady in Milan
Wrought for a madness unto Man,
A fawn Il Moro could not tame;
Her beauty unbedecked with pearls
More than all Beatrice's girls,
Her eyes a secret subtle flame.

Brocade wherein her body dressed
Was hallowed; flowers her footstep pressed
Suspired incense ere they died.
Her father mazed with alchemy
Wrought in his cellar ceaselessly.
She lived in quiet, gentle pride.

And by her garden in his hour
Passed Leonardo, come with power
From Florence. So he saw her face
Bending above the shriveled stalks
Of autumn on the garden walks.
And Leonardo drank her grace.

She was as if a sunset were
With fresher colors, clearer air,
And a more golden coil of cloud.
She was as if all citherns swooned
With one rich harmony myriad-tuned,
Haunting, enchanting, pure and proud.

And Leonardo said, "Ladye,
I know not what you do to me
Who have and have not, seek nor find.
The sea-shell and the falcon's feather,
Greece and the rock and shifting weather
Have taught me many things of mind.

"My heart has taught me many things,
And so have emperors, popes, and kings,
And so have leaves and green May-flies;
Yea, I have learned from bird and beast,
From slouching dwarf and ranting priest.
Yet, in the end, how am I wise?

"Though with dividers and a quill
I weave some miracle of will,—
Say, that men fly,—though I design
For peace or war a thousand things
Gaining applause from dukes and kings,—
Though soft and deft my colors shine,

"Though my quick wit breed thunderbolts
I may not loose on all these dolts,

Things they are babes to comprehend,—
Though from the crevice in stone or lime
I trace grave outlines mocking Time,—
I know when I am beaten, Friend!

"Say that there lived of old a saint
Even Leonardo dared not paint,
Even Leonardo dared not draw,—
Too perfect in her breathing prime
For colors to transmit to time
Or quill attempt,—aye, ev'n in awe!

"Say this, cold histories, and say
I look not on her from this day
Lest frenzied I destroy my art.
O golden lily,—how she stands
Listening! Beauty,—ah, your hands,
Your little hands tear out my heart!

"Do you not know you are so fair,
Brighter than springtime in the air?
What says your mirror to your mind?"
"Phantom," she whispered, "Do you plead
With ghostly gestures? . . . Ah, indeed,
Pity a lady deaf and blind

"Since birth!" . . . Then Leonardo turned
Saluting, though the sunset burned
In nimbus round her,—went his way
In daze, repeating "God's defect,
Even he!—and masterpiece elect!"
He never saw her from that day.

MARY ALDIS

Barberries

You say I touch the barberries
As a lover his mistress?
What a curious fancy!
One must be delicate, you know,
They have bitter thorns.
You say my hand is hurt?
Oh no, it was my breast,
It was crushed and pressed—
I mean—why yes, of course, of course—
There is a bright drop, isn't there?
Right on my finger,
Just the color of a barberry,
But it comes from my heart.

Do you love barberries?
In the autumn
When the sun's desire
Touches them to a glory of crimson and gold?
I love them best then.
There is something splendid about them;
They are not afraid
Of being warm and glad and bold,
They flush joyously
Like a cheek under a lover's kiss,

They bleed cruelly
Like a dagger wound in the breast,
They flame up madly for their little hour,
Knowing they must die—
Do you love barberries?

When You Come

("There was a girl with him for a time. She took him to her room when he was desolate, warmed him and took care of him. One day he could not find her. For many weeks he walked constantly in that locality in search of her." From the "Life of Francis Thompson.")

When you come tonight
To our small room,
You will look and listen—
I shall not be there.

You will cry out your dismay
To the unheeding gods;
You will wait and look and listen—
I shall not be there.

There is a part of you I love
More than your hands in mine at rest;
There is a part of you I love
More than your lips upon my breast;

There is a part of you I wound
Even in my caress;
There is a part of you withheld
I may not possess;

There is a part of you I hate—
Your need of me
When you would be alone,
Alone and free;

When you come tonight
To our small room
You will look and listen—
I shall not be there.

To One Who Asks

Curious you should not see my feet are weary—
Weary of the way you see so fair—
As, wondering, I watch you note each silver pathway making question
Why I will not tread.

Curious you should not see my eyes are weary—
Weary of the sorrow and the passion they have seen—
Asking now to close, the last kiss given,
The last word said.

Curious you should not see my hands are weary—
Weary with their ceaseless fluttering 'round little things—
Concerned no longer with caresses or with loving—
Still and uncomforted.

You are so young in loving, you who cry
"Passion is beauty!" You would go
Wherever beckoning moonlight called you forward,
Wherever beauty led.

Your feet are hurrying now, your soul is hungering. . . .
Boy of the intent eyes, the questing will,
Why do you ask my two tired empty hands
To give you bread?

You will not see my very soul is weary. . . .
I think it died long, long ago, or fled.
Would you ask caresses from a shadow woman?
Kisses from the dead?

October Song

Over and over and over there sounds
The monotonous beat and pound of the rain
As it falls:
The boughs of the oak trees are bending and swaying:
The ceaseless wind
Rattles and whirls and shakes to the ground
The acorn balls.

Steadily pounds the rain
On the drooping heads of palely reluctant flowers
Born of the sun:
Their petals are loosened; they give themselves

To the dark expectant earth
Wearily, drearily, daintily,
One by one.

Undaunted, the maples
Show gayly their bronzes and yellows—
A flaming shroud:
Brooding over their beauty,
Obscuring—shifting malignly—
There hovers in misty denying
The pall of a cloud.

The dark earth waits.
For the wandering leaves, the yielding flowers, the acorn balls
The day is done.
Softly they fall and receive the relentless rain—
Softly, that life shall be, that joy shall spring,
But for them—never, never, never again
The caress of the sun.

JOHN BENNETT

In a Rose Garden

A hundred years from now, dear heart,
    We shall not care at all,
It will not matter then a whit,
    The honey or the gall.
The summer days that we have known,
Will all forgotten be and flown;
The garden will be overgrown
    Where now the roses fall.

A hundred years from now, dear heart,
    We shall not mind the pain;
The throbbing crimson tide of life
    Will not have left a stain.
The song we sing together, dear,
The dream we dream together here,
Will mean no more than means a tear
    Amid a summer rain.

A hundred years from now, dear heart,
    The grief will all be o'er;
The sea of care will surge in vain
    Upon a careless shore.

These glasses we turn down today
Here at the parting of the way—
We shall be wineless then as they,
And shall not mind it more.

A hundred years from now, dear heart,
We'll neither know nor care
What came of all life's bitterness,
Or followed love's despair.
Then fill the glasses up again,
And kiss me through the rose-leaf rain;
We'll build one castle more in Spain,
And dream one more dream there.

The Abbot of Derry

Lines, as from a Lyttel Booke of Balettys and Dyties, enscribed to Richard Nix, Bishoppe, by his Admyring, Faithful Friend, John Skelton, Rector of Diss:

The Abbot of Derry
Hates Satan and Sin;
'Tis strange of him, very;
They're both his blood-kin:
And the Devil go bury the Abbot of Derry,
And bury him deep, say I!

The Abbot of Derry
Has woman nor wine.
'Tis kind of him, very,
To leave them all mine:
And the Devil go bury the Abbot of Derry,
And bury him deep, say I!

Says the Abbot of Derry:
"To-morrow ye die!"
"Eat, drink, and be merry!"
Say Dolly and I:
And the Devil go bury the Abbot of Derry,
And bury him deep, say I!

The Abbot of Derry
Says "All flesh is grass."
Sure, the Abbot should know,
For the Abbot's an ass!
And the Devil go bury the Abbot of Derry,
And bury him deep, say I!

The Abbot of Derry
Says "Love is a knave!"
I shall love when the Abbot
Lies deep in his grave:—
And the Devil go bury the Abbot of Derry,
And bury him deep, say I!

The Song of the Spanish Main

Out in the south, when the day is done,
And the gathered winds go free,
Where golden-sanded rivers run,
Fair islands fade in the setting sun,
And the great ships stagger, one by one,
Up from the windy sea.

Out in the south, where a twilight shroud
Hangs o'er the ocean's rim,
Sail on sail, like a floating cloud,
Galleon, brigantine, cannon-browed,
Rich from the Indies, homeward crowd,
Singing a Spanish hymn.

Out in the south, when the sun has set
And the lightning flickers pale,
The cannon bellow their steady threat,
The ships grind, all in a crimson sweat,
And hoarse throats call, "Have ye stricken yet?"
Across the quarter-rail.

Out in the south, in the dead of night,
When I hear the thunder speak,
'Tis the Englishmen in their pride and might
Mad with glory and blind with fight,
Locked with the Spaniards, left and right,
Fighting them cheek to cheek.

Out in the south, when the dawn's pale light
Walks cold on the beaten shore,
And the mists of night, like clouds of fight,
Silvery violet, blinding bright,
Drift in glory from height to height
Where the white-tailed eagles soar;

There comes a song through the salt and spray,
Blood-kin to the ocean's roar,

"All day long down Florez way
Richard Grenville stands at bay.
Come and take him if ye may!"
    Then hush, forevermore.

Love Has Forsaken You: A Dirge

Sadly we come for you;
Muffled the drum for you;
Voices are dumb for you;
    Bitter tears run.
Love has forsaken you;
Hate cannot waken you;
Azrael has taken you;
    Night has begun.

Toil will not hurry you,
Care will not worry you,
After we bury you,
    Life's struggle done,
In the grave wrought for you;
Men will grieve naught for you;
Scarce have a thought for you
    Under the sun.

JOHN BENNETT

The Wandering Minstrel's Song

"Oh, love is like a summer's day!"
I heard a minstrel sing,
"But fast its glory fades away
When cometh evening.
So shall thine heart grow old and gray
Before the roses fall,
And like the wind along the way
Go crying after yesterday,
As empty as a shadow-play
Upon a garden-wall!"

Across the void and stony waste
I heard that minstrel sing;
The chill, autumnal afternoon
Rang with his carolling:
"Oh, love is like a summer day
In which no shadows fall!"
I heard that wandering minstrel say;
But ere the echo died away
I heard a cuckoo call!

And there's many folk like sunshine,
And many folk like wine;
But few folk like the rain's bleak song,
And fewer still like mine.

JOHN BENNETT

The Piper's Song

We are all but fellow-travellers
Along Life's weary way;
If any man can play the pipes,
In God's name let him play!

LAURA BENET

The Penny

A penny, a penny small, a penny round!
Why do you bend your eyes upon the ground?

Magical things that leap and frisk
Are conjured up by that copper disk.

Toss it into the green lagoon;
It rises in the round, yellow moon.

Throw it into the cleft yew tree;
The woodcutter finds a treasury.

Spin it on an oak table top;
And skipping lines of rabbits hop.

Roll it under the coach of the bride;
Luck goes over the country side.

Ring it that children's feet may sing
Round barrel organs capering.

Cheaper than silver, dearer than gold.
Thistledown light, yet hard to hold.

A penny, a penny small, a penny gay!
Why do you turn your dancing eyes away?

LAURA BENET

The Sea Child

A wild wind blew from the strand,
Bleak and chilly was the shore,
When along the beaten sand,
Swift she bounded to our door;
When upon our hearthstone clean,
Darkly dripped her elfin sheen.

Did we take her for a child,
As she sat alone, apart,
Giving glances, timid, wild—
Sighs to melt a mortal heart?
Did we vow it was a spell,
When she filled our empty well?

She could weave a chain of weeds,
Strangely bright, like opal seas;
Sow the earth with crooked seeds,
That sprang up anemones;
Sing to creatures, great and small,
And they hurried to her call.

As dusk fell upon the land,
Ran she the salt air to quaff,
Clapped her palms upon the sand,
And we heard the fishes laugh;
Heard them chuckle and laugh low,
Calling to their comrades so?

Soft we spoke unto the maid,
Taught her lips to form a prayer;
Dawn that through the casement strayed
Found her bed all cold and bare:

Cold the path, where dripping feet
Flew through fragrant meadow sweet:
Magic music on the shore—
And we never saw her more!

Enemies

I am afraid of the dark,
    That it will not let me alone;
The intimacies of its silence
    Would kindle stone.

But I'm more afraid of the light,
    For its spaces snatch my breath
And make me question the time
    I shall travel with Death.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Two Sonnets To My Wife

I

Because her voice is Schönberg in a dream
In which his harshness plays with softer keys
This does not mean that it is void of ease
And cannot gather to a strolling gleam.
Her voice is full of manners and they seem
To place a masquerade on thought and tease
Its strength until it finds that it has knees,
And whimsically leaves its heavy scheme.

Discords can be the search of harmony
For worlds that lie beyond the reach of poise
And must be captured with abandoned hands.
The music of my wife strives to be free
And often takes a light, unbalanced voice
While madly walking over thoughtful lands.

II

My wife relents to life and does not speak
Each moment with a deft and rapid note.
Sometimes a clumsy weirdness finds her throat
And ushers in a music that is weak
And bargains with the groping of her heart.
But even then she plays with graver tones
That do not sell themselves to laughs and moans
But seek the counsel of a deeper art.

She drapes her loud emotions in a shroud
Of glistening thought that waves above their dance
And sometimes parts to show their startled eyes.
The depths of mind within her have not bowed
To sleek emotion with its amorous glance.
She slaps its face and laughs at its surprise!

Advice To A Forest

O trees, to whom the darkness is a child
Scampering in and out of your long, green beards;
O trees, to whom sunlight is a tattered pilgrim
Counting his dreams within your hermitage
And slipping down the road, in twilight robes;
O trees, whose leaves make an incense of sound
Reeling with the beat of your caught feet,
Do not mingle your tips in startled hatred,
When little men come to fell you.
These men will saw you into strips
Of pointed brooding, blind with paint,
But underneath you men will chase
The grey staccato of their lives
Down a glaring maze of walls
Much harder than your own.
And when, at last, the deep brown gaze
Of stolidly amorous time steals over you,
The little men who bit into your hearts
Will stray off in a patter of rabbits' feet.
Look down upon these children then
With the aloof and weary tolerance
That all still things possess,
O trees, to whom the darkness was a child
Scampering in and out of your long, green beards.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Pine Trees

The pine trees patiently unstitch
    The brightness of this afternoon,
But while they work their pungent thoughts
    Are longing for the dulcet moon.

The pine trees only live at night
    When moonlight brings them silver eyes;
Throughout the day they stand like blind
    Green beggars, uttering restless cries.

At night they listen to the words
    Of winds from far-off mountain rims,
And feel the reckless grief that springs
    From those who stand with prisoned limbs.

To A Man

Master of earnest equilibrium,
You are a Christ made delicate
By centuries of baffled meditation.
You curve an old myth to a peaceful sword,
Like some sleep-walker challenging
The dream that gave him shape.
With gentle, antique insistence
You place your child's hand on the universe
And trace a smile of love within its depths.
And yet, the whirling scarecrow men have made

Of something that eludes their sight,
May have the startling simplicity of your smile.

Once every thousand years
Stillness fades into a shape
That men may crucify.

Death

I shall walk down the road.
I shall turn and feel upon my feet
The kisses of Death, like scented rain.
For Death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head.
He will tell me, his voice like jewels
Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me.
Then he will graze me with his hands
And I shall be one of the sleeping, silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on.

ESTHER AND BRAINARD BATES

Ipswich Bar

The mist lay still on Heartbreak Hill,
The sea was cold below,
The waves rolled up and one by one
Broke heavily and slow.

And through the clouds the gray gulls fled,
The gannet whistled past,
Across the dunes the wailing loons
Hid from the rising blast.

The moaning wind, that all day long
Had haunted marsh and lea,
Went mad at night, and beating round,
Fled shrieking out to sea.

The crested waves turned gray to white,
That tossed the drifting spar,
But far more bright the yellow light
That gleamed on Ipswich Bar.

Old Harry Main, wild Harry Main,
Upon the shifting sand
Had built a flaming beacon light
To lure the ships to land.

"The storm breaks out and far tonight,—
They seek a port to bide;
God rest ye, sirs, on Ipswich Bar
Your ships shall surely ride.

"They see my fires, my dancing fires,
They lay their courses down,
And ill betide the mariners
Who make for Ipswich Town,

"For mine the wreck, and mine the gold,—
With none to lay the blame,—
So hold ye down tonight, good sirs,
And I will feed the flame!"

Oh dark the night and wild the gale!
The skipper hither turned
To where, afar, on Ipswich Bar,
The treacherous beacon burned.

With singing shrouds and snapping sheets
The vessel swiftly bore
And headed for the guiding lights
Which shone along the shore.

The shoaling waters told no tale,
The tempest made no sign,
Till full before her plunging bows
Flashed out a whitened line!

She struck, she heeled,—the parting stays
Went by with mast and spar;

And then the wind and rain beat out
The light on Ipswich Bar.

Gray dawn beneath a dying storm;
A figure gaunt and thin
Went splashing through the tangled sedge
To drag the treasure in;

For when the darkness broke away
The lances of the moon
Had pointed where lay bow in air
A wrecking picaroon.

What matter if the open day
Bore witness to his shame?
'Twas his the wreck and his the gold,
And none had seen to blame.

He did not know the eyes of men
Were watching from afar
As Harry Main went back and forth
The length of Ipswich Bar.

They told the Ipswich fisher folk
Who all aghast and grim
Came running down through Pudding Lane
In maddened search for him;

No word, no blow, no bitter jest,—
They did not strike nor mar,
But short the shrift of Harry Main
That day on Ipswich Bar.

They marched him out at ebb of tide
Where lay the shattered wreck,
And bound him to the dripping rocks
With chains about his neck.

With chains about his guilty neck
They left him to the wave—
The lapping tide rose eagerly
To hide the wrecker's grave.

* * * *

And now when sudden storms strike down
With hoarse and threatening tones,
Old Harry Main must rise again
And gird his sea-wracked bones,

To coil a cable made of sand
Which ever breaks in twain,
While echoing through the salted marsh
Is heard his clanking chain.

When rock and shoal are white with foam,
The watchers on the sands
Can see his ghostly form rise up
And wring its fettered hands.

And out at sea his cries are heard
Above the storm and far,
Where cold and still, old Heartbreak Hill
Looks down on Ipswich Bar.

JULES BOIS

A Edwin Arlington Robinson

Poète Américain, exceptionnel et grand
Parce qu'intérieur, escarpé, plein de cimes,
Tu dresses, parmi nos rumeurs si peu sublimes,
Ta longue silhouette à l'air indifférent.
Pourtant ton coeur est tendre et frémit, pathétique,
A l'aiguillon secret de tout vital moustique . . .
Et surtout la Douleur des Autres te fait mal.
Qui n'a banalisé la Femme et l'arsenal
De ses armes? Mais, Toi, quand tu l'évoques, Elle
Nous apparait plus profonde et plus éternelle!
Tu parles peu: Tes mots à ton oeuvre sont dûs.
Ils savent, de silence impregnés et tendus,
Eveiller un écho dans les rochers de l'Ame.
On te relit quand on t'a lu. C'est ta réclame
D'être plus admiré quand on t'a lu deux fois.
L'Homme, qu'on défigure ou que l'on transfigure
Fragile et fort, esclave et pourtant roi des rois,
Retrouve dans tes chants sa normale stature.
Sans rien d'exagéré ni rien d'artificiel,
Il se détache, humain, sur le surhumain Ciel.
Lorsqu'on ouvre ton livre en ce siècle de prose
Ou de vers si forcés qu'on en devient morose,
On songe: "Tiens, c'est donc aussi simple que ça?
"Enfin sur mon chemin un Poète passa . . ."

* * * *

II

Mais l'on jase là-haut, au Paradis des Bardes:
Son de harpe ou de flute, ou bruit de hallebardes . . .
Browning dit: "Après tout, il monologue bien.
"Lui non plus, il n'a pris à personne son bien."
Tennyson, qui bénit avec ses mains pieuses
Le Parnasse nouveau des Montagnes Rocheuses,
A ces vers resserrés comme ceux de Lucain,
Grommelle, un peu jaloux: "Drôle d'Américain!"
Merlin, entrebaillant l'huis de Broceliande,
S'écrie, en secouant son chapeau de guirlande:
"Ce Désenchanteur-là vit seul que j'étais vieux . . ."
Mais Viviane,—qui pour l'homme, même aux Cieux,
Garde un faible,—soupire et rit: "Par Sainte Barbe!
"Lui m'a comprise . . . C'est le Merlin vrai, sans barbe!"
Cessant sa controverse avec l'Ange Israfel,
Poe dit: "Il est étrange autant que naturel."
Walt Whitman, qui jamais n'eut peur du paradoxe,
Remarque: "Il est moderne aussi bien qu'orthodoxe."
Au lieu de discuter les modes de demain,
Les Muses cette fois se tiennent par la main.
William Vaughn Moody, qu'étoile l'asphodèle,
Tend l'immortel laurier à son ami fidèle;
Et Verlaine, avec le Calice redouté,
Dit: "Mes Frères, buvons ensemble à sa santé!"

* * * *

III

Robinson! je songe à ton célèbre homonyme . . .
Comme Lui, ton génie à tout créer s'anime.
Solitaire et n'ayant pas même un Vendredi,
Tu défrichas ton Ile avec un coeur hardi.

Ton esthétique, tu l'inventes. Ton langage,
Tu le fais. Ta psychologie est ton ouvrage.
Dans un siècle bruyant, superficiel, hableur,
Banal,—Tu vas muet, profond, ensorceleur.
Ta Maison se bâtit de tes mains obstinées;
Elle s'orne du fruit de tes vertes années.
Sur le Roc, Elle dresse un phare haut et sûr;
Et l'horizon est large, et solide est le mur.

Tu nous donnes l'exemple, et tu es cet exemple.
Tu suis l'Etoile, tel le Mage ou le Berger . . .
Tu ne t'égares pas au méandre léger,
Tu vas à ton Labeur, comme un prêtre à son Temple.
Nous tous, nous écoutons les Sirènes; mais Toi,
Tel Ulysse sur son navire qui tressaille,
Tu regardes bondir les vagues en bataille,
Et souris,—sans fléchir à la commune loi.
Cependant, c'est la Vie,—et non un Rêve morne
Ou bruyant,—que ton vers, sobre et vigoureux, orne.
Tu n'es si détaché que pour enlacer mieux
L'âpre Réalité, qui passe sous tes yeux.
Nous nous perdons parfois aux sentiers de traverse;
Tu suis le Grand Chemin. Ton Char jamais ne verse,
Tandis que trop souvent nous culbutons, hagards,
Dans le torrent ou dans l'ornière . . . Tes regards
Ont je ne sais quoi qui devine ou qui déchiffre.
Ton calme nous guérit du tambour ou du fifre . . .
Te suivre, c'est revoir l'Etoile qui renait;
Car, malgré l'Obstacle où le Destin s'acharnait,
Malgré Modred, malgré Gauwain,—et Guinevère,
Pareil à Lancelot, Tu trouvas la Lumière . . .

MacDowell Colony.
Octobre, 1922.

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

Pirate Treasure

A lady loved a swaggering rover;
The seven salt seas he voyaged over,
Bragged of a hoard none could discover,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

She bloomed in a mansion dull and stately
And as to Meeting she walked sedately,
From the tail of her eye she liked him greatly,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Rings in his ears and a red sash wore he,
He sang her a song and he told her a story;
"I'll make ye Queen of the Ocean!" swore he,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

She crept from bed by her sleeping sister;
By the old grey mill he met and kissed her.
Blue day dawned before they missed her,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

And while they prayed her out of Meeting,
Her wild little heart with bliss was beating,
As seaward went the lugger fleeting,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Choose in haste and repent at leisure;
A buccaneer life is not all pleasure.
He set her ashore with a little treasure,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Off he sailed where waves were dashing,
Knives were gleaming, cutlasses clashing.
And a ship on jagged rocks went crashing,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Over his bones the tides are sweeping;
The only trace of the rover sleeping
Is what he left in the lady's keeping,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Two hundred years is his name unspoken,
The secret of his hoard unbroken;
But a black-browed race wears the pirate's token,
Hey! Jolly Roger, O.

Sea-blue eyes that gleam and glisten,
Lips that sing,—and you like to listen,—
A swaggering song. It might be this one;
"Hey! Jolly Roger, O."

Low Tide

Who creeps into the cave
To spy the crannied secrets darkly hidden
And pluck the clinging treasures from their beds?
Who follows on retreating steps unbidden,

And mocks the ebbing fury of the wave?
Or impudently treads
The lowest silver sand, a moment bare,
To pry into the bashful, rosy pool? You dare?
Beware!

Is mortal life secure,
Or human footing out of bound so sure,
That wingless you dare climb
Through treacherous and immemorial slime,
Treading the slippery slope, an oubliette before
The cavern's ominous door?
Then hark! Bend close your sea-shell of an ear.
Do you not hear
A hollow growl, a hoarse and sullen roar
Below you, or behind you, or before;
A growing threat that quivers in the air?
The monster is returning to his lair!
Beware!

Coil upon coil he writhes between the stones
In awful, hidden power,
Faster and faster yet! Are human bones,—
Fragile as any flower,—
Proof against teeth that gnawed the granite wall
And ground it into pebbles smooth and small?
Hark to the undertones!
Can frantic feet out-speed
The ancient Terror crawling through the weed,
Who swallows sand and cave and boulder,—all
His salty kingdom, briefly visible?
A roar, a rush! Spume leaps upon your hair.
Beware! Beware!

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

The Frightened Path

The wood grew very quiet;
The road made a sudden turn.
Then a wavering, furtive path crept out
From the tangled briar and fern.

"Where does it lead?" I asked the child.
She shivered and shook her head.
"It doesn't *lead* to any place,
It is running away!" she cried.

"It is running away on tiptoe
Through the untrodden grass,
To join the cheerful highroad
Where real, live people pass.

"It runs from a heap of ruins
Where a home stood in old days.
But nothing living goes there now,
And—Nothing Living stays."

Fairy Ring

I stepped within the fairy ring,
Where it was green, so green!
Then I heard the trill of a fairy bell,
And the song of the Fairy Queen.

The secret that she murmured me,
To the trill of the fairy bell,
Was sweet, so sweet you'd not believe
If I should try to tell.

But step you too in the fairy ring,
And hold fast to my hand;
Then we may hear a lovelier thing,
And both will understand!

PADRAIC COLUM

A Ballad Maker

Once I loved a maiden fair,
Over the hills and far away,
Lands she had and lovers to spare,
Over the hills and far away.
And I was stooped and troubled sore,
And my face was pale, and the coat I wore
Was thin as my supper the night before.
Over the hills and far away.

Once I passed in the autumn late,
Over the hills and far away,
Her bawn and byre and painted gate,
Over the hills and far away.
She was leaning there in the twilight space,
Sweet sorrow was on her fair young face,
And her wistful eyes were away from the place—
Over the hills and far away.

Maybe she thought as she watched me come,
Over the hills and far away,
With my awkward stride, and my face so glum,
Over the hills and far away,

"Spite of his stoop, he still is young;
They say he goes the Shee among,
Ballads he makes, I've heard them sung
Over the hills and far away."

She gave me good-night in gentle wise,
Over the hills and far away,
Shyly lifting to mine, dark eyes,
Over the hills and far away.
What could I do but stop and speak,
And she no longer proud but meek?
She plucked me a rose like her wild rose cheek—
Over the hills and far away.

To-morrow, Mavourneen, a sleeveen weds,
Over the hills and far away,
With corn in haggard and cattle in sheds,
Over the hills and far away.
And I who have lost her—the dear, the rare—
Well, I got me this ballad to sing at the fair,
'Twill bring enough money to drown my care,
Over the hills and far away.

A Poor Scholar of the Forties

My eyelids red and heavy are,
With bending o'er the smold'ring peat.
I know the Aeneid now by heart,
My Virgil read in cold and heat,
In loneliness and hunger smart.
And I know Homer, too, I ween,
As Munster poets know Ossian.

And I must walk this road that winds
'Twixt bog and bog, while east there lies
A city with its men and books,
With treasurers open to the wise,
Heart-words from equals, comrade-looks;
    Down here they have but tale and song,
    They talk Repeal the whole night long.

"You teach Greek verbs and Latin nouns,"
The dreamer of Young Ireland said.
"You do not hear the muffled call,
The sword being forged, the far-off tread
Of hosts to meet as Gael and Gall—
    What good to us your wisdom store,
    Your Latin verse, your Grecian lore?"

And what to me is Gael or Gall?
Less than the Latin or the Greek.—
I teach these by the dim rush-light,
In smoky cabins night and week.
But what avail my teaching slight?
    Years hence, in rustic speech, a phrase,
    As in wild earth, a Grecian vase!

The Wild Ass

The wild ass lounges, legs struck out
In vagrom unconcern:
The tombs of Achaemedian kings
Are for those hooves to spurn.

And all of rugged Tartary
Lies with him on the ground,
The Tartary that knows no awe,
That has nor ban nor bound.

The wild horse from the herd is plucked
To bear a saddle's weight;
The boar is one keeps covert, and
The wolf runs with a mate;

But he's the solitary of space,
Curbless and unbeguiled;
The only being that bears a heart
Nor recreant to the wild.

The Humming Bird

Up from the navel of the world,
Where Cuzco has her founts of fire,
The passer of the Gulf he comes.

He lives in air, a bird of fire,
Charted by flowers still he comes,
Through spaces that are half the world.

With glows of suns and seas he comes;
A life within our shadowed world
That's bloom, and gem, and kiss of fire!

PADRAIC COLUM

Reminiscence

Sections VII and VIII

VII

"The bond-woman comes to the boorie;
She sings with a heart grown wild,
How a hundred rivers are flowing
Between herself and her child.

"Then comes the lad with the hazel,
And the folding-star is in the rack;
'Night 's a good herd' to the cattle,
He sings 'She brings all things back'."

VIII

The crows still fly to that wood, and out of that wood she comes,
Carrying her load of sticks, a little less now than before,
Her strength being less; she bends as the hoar rush bends in the wind;
She will sit by the fire, in the smoke, her thoughts on the root and the living branch no more.

The crows still fly to that wood, that wood that is sparse and gapped;
The last one left of the herd makes way by the lane to the stall,
Lowing distress as she goes; the great trees there are all down;
No fiddle sounds in the hut to-night, and a candle only gives light to the hall.

The trees are sparse and gapped, yet a sapling spreads on the joints
Of the wall, till the castle stones fall down into the moat:
The last one who minds that our race once stood as a spreading tree,
She goes, and thorns are bare, where the blackbird, his full songs done, strikes one metal note.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

Solitude

There is the loneliness of peopled places:
Streets roaring with their human flood, the crowd
That fills bright rooms with billowing sounds and faces,
Like foreign music, overshrill and loud.
There is the loneliness of one who stands
Fronting the waste, under the cold sea-light,
A wisp of flesh against the endless sands,
Like a lost gull in solitary flight.

Single is all up-rising and down-lying,
Struggle, or fear, or silence none may share.
Each is alone in bearing, and in dying.
Conquest is uncompanioned as despair.
Yet I have known no loneliness like this:
Locked in your arms and bent beneath your kiss.

Capriccio

I shall have pearls blacker than caviar,
Rubies such as a ripe pomegranate bleeds,
Gold pale as honey dripping from a star,
Brought me by slaves like snow and apple-seeds.

I shall have linen smooth as pigeons' throats,
I shall have purple more than sunset-red,—
The velvet leap of leopards to my boats,—
The fragrance of the cedars to my bed.

I shall have music stronger than the wind
And sweeter than a Chinese apricot.
In gardens like translucent melon-rind
I shall have dreams as sharp as bergamot.

Before my throning presence, emperors
Will stand abashed as troubled children do.
I shall not smile though every knee defers,
But bid them go, bid them bring night, and you.

Perneb's Tomb

"Upon these stones Time broke his teeth," you said.
We stood in Perneb's tomb, and stared upon
The hammered blocks that held the royal dead
Whose pomp still stood, altho' his breath was gone.
You said, "Slaves sweated for that narrow room."
Their scattered bones are mixed with desert sand;
But on the high walls, ruddy in the gloom,
The files of the king's servitors yet stand.

We shall not rear to death such monuments
With massive marble, nor with crimson chalk.
Nor wrap our withered limbs in cerements
More spicy than our rare ephemeral talk.
So Time, who broke his teeth upon these stones,
Gnaws at our hearts, careless of Perneb's bones.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

Avatar

Yet I have loved these walls,—
grave with spaced etchings,
darkened by their books,
like stones that mellowing mosses climb,—
have loved the furniture
cherished of time:
firm contours and old colours, with the flare
of russet bittersweet in a green bowl
and the black Persian shawl of my great-grandmother
flung, like her gracious shadow, on this chair.
Yes, I have loved
soft rugs, and softer flowers,
the silver and the cedarwood, the purple, the fine linen
that is ours.
I have loved things
more intimately known than men and women,
things that, beyond the feeble flesh, endure,
agèd and fine, familiar and secure.
Yes, I have loved. . . .

And now I stand reproved
by you, who want
for this bodily tenement
as temporal a house as some brief tent,—
you whose sole cedar grows on Lebanon,
shaking its awful banners like a paean,
you, whose sole purple is the dawn adored
above the desert,
you, whose sole linen
is the weave abhorred
that was the loin-cloth of the Galilean.

Old Women

Old women sit, stiffly, mosaics of pain,
Framed in drab doorways looking on the dark.
Rarely they rouse to gossip or complain
As dozing bitches break their dream to bark.
And then once more they fold their creaking bones
In silence, pulled about them like a shawl.
Their memories: a heap of tumbling stones,
Once builded stronger than a city wall.
Sometimes they mend the gaps with twitching hand,—
Because they see a woman big with child,
Because a wet wind smells of grave-pocked land,
Because a train wailed, because troops defiled.
Sometimes old women limp through altered streets
Whose hostile houses beat them down to earth;
Now in their beds they fumble at the sheets
That once were spread for bridal, once for birth,
And now are laid for women who are cold
With difficult plodding or with sitting still.
Old women, pitying all that age can kill,
Lie quiet, wondering that they are old.

Myth

1.

Like twanging jews-harps, snug cicadas
Hymn nasally the summer sun.
Their indolent god with drowsy fingers
Strokes the shrill valleys, one by one.

Now he has filled his happy nostrils
With scent, and pricked his golden ears,
From his immortal limbs, like water,
Shaking earth's follies and its fears.

2.

Upon the slope the trees are praying
Like pagan priests with unbent knees;
From the wide roofless temple wanders
The voice of their rough litanies.

Dusk enters—a young boy with candles,
Soon the midsummer god will rise,
Black as warm-breathed bull, where falling
Stars melt like wax before his eyes.

HERBERT S. GORMAN

The Barcarole of James Smith

With willing arms I row and row
So dear a freight that I must know
The moment is the point of time
When James Smith changes, grows sublime,
And hurries to the flaming tryst
Of Love, that ancient alchemist,
And grows into his thoughts and comes
To half awaked millenniums.

I could imagine madrigals
With curiously dying falls
To creep into your little ears
And lift you with me through the years.
But you would barely understand
Why you were lifted, long for land,
And tell me to row back again
From heaven to the Vast Inane.

Meanwhile I sit and row the boat
And catch your laughter, watch your throat
And mouth sway perilously near
And burn away the atmosphere.
The sunset shakes me almost free
From river, boat and lunacy.

You say it's rather like a fish
Of crimson on a golden dish?

It may be so. It may be I
Have other thoughts that signify
A closer meaning for us two. . . .
But I must row and what's to do?
If you could see yourself and be
The rower, look through eyes of me
Not knowing what was hid inside
Your little head—but that's denied.

You'll be the freight until the end:
I'll be the rower—and the friend.
And you will never know the thought
That makes you curiously wrought
In other substance than you are:
And I will steer by some vague star
That is not even lit for you,
And I daresay the star will do.

If I were not James Smith but one
Not haunted by the desert sun
Of too excessive visioning
Perhaps you'd be a different thing
And quite unusual, but that
At most is but conjectured at. . . .
So willingly I row and row
And let you wonder while I know.

The Mandrake Root

The mandrake root! Your face is grey as iron;
  Your eyes are chilled with something dead and bleak;
You have the pride in sorrow that Lord Byron
  Enchanted London with. And for a week

You've fumbled through the leaves and touched
                the quick
  Of this despairing plant and felt it crack
Between your nervous fingers. Are you sick?—
  For mandrakes are an aphrodisiac.

O, come. This will not do. The feeble note
  You play is like a drop within a cup
No louder than the pulses in your throat
  That bid you now to pull this damned thing up.

One root is in your heart; the other, in
  The heart you filled and emptied with a curse. . . .
A sturdy pull and everything that's been
  Will merely echo that it might be worse.

The mandrake root! O pull it up forever
  And fling its bleeding leaves upon the ground,
And understand that Time is like a river
  That washes hollow wounds without a sound.

HERBERT S. GORMAN

Love's Fanatic

Well, here it is: you call for me: I come,
    But with an eagerness not quite my own,
Propelled by that decisive martyrdom
    That pleased the saints upon their faggot-throne.

You see them smiling in the cruel flame
    That exquisitely licks their willing limbs.
And finding some sad pleasure in the game
    Not quite embodied in their lusty hymns.

And so I come: and though I go, be sure
    That I will come again tomorrow, too,
And, Love's fanatic, hasten to endure
    That littleness that is so great in you.

I am the weakling of that helpless strength
    That throws this broken body you despise
Before your carelessness, to find at length
    The faith that sleeps behind your faithless eyes.

Trance

Where the East Indian sits
    In cataleptic trance
The twisting hours go
    Like cobras in a dance.

They shake their swollen heads
From side to side;
He sits indifferent
To time and tide.

The sun gleams coldly down
Upon the eyes
That, blank and sightless, stare
Through years and skies.

The crumbling stars drift down;
The mountains fret away;
Iron and bronze and gold
Turn brittle and decay.

Day holds the Night in fee
Till night obliterate
Colour and scent and sound
And mortal state.

And Mystery begets
A shining place of peace,
A vague unruffled pool
Where ripples cease.

The twisting hours go
Like cobras in a dance
Where the East Indian sits
In cataleptic trance.

HERBERT S. GORMAN

In The Dark, In The Night

In the dark, in the night, I went down
To a street that I knew in the town,
To a street I had last seen through tears
And had lost in a jungle of years.

And the wind in the alley began
To revolve up and down like a man,
Like a man who could not find a door
That he knew had been there long before.

And the moon with a slow sullen stare
Bowed his heavy face over me there,
As I stood for a moment dry-eyed
By the houses that shuddered and sighed.

LOUISE DUTTON

Carmen

(*From the French of Theophile Gautier*)

Carmen is thin, with draggled locks.
She has strange pigment in her eyes.
The devil took his color box
And tanned her with his dyes.

Carmen is thin, the women say,
But all the men are hers to tease.
When the archbishop kneels to pray,
He kneels before her knees.

Close in her amber neck, how slow
She twists and coils her splendid hair.
Down slender shoulders hanging low,
It was a weary weight to bear.

Now, in her heavy pallor set,
Her mouth with conquering laughter parts.
Her lips are red, her lips are wet,
For they are red with blood of hearts.

So she was made, a haggard thing,
Keener than beauty red and white,
Because her glances burn, and sting
Stale senses to delight.

She has, to be her secret lure,
A grain of salt from that fell sea
Whence Venus, springing calm and sure,
Still trails the foam unendingly.

When I Come Home

I will not have the house bedecked
And tables spread for me.
Go strew the wide fields daisy-flecked,
The way they used to be.

Find me a rising wind to blow,
Toss up a cloud or two,
And wait beside the tree we know,
When I come home to you.

Open Sky

They pent my youth in a chamber wide,
On a silken bed to lie,
But I beat my hands at the wall and cried,
"Give way! Let me find the sky."

They let me forth from that house of ease,
In an orchard place to be.
They prisoned me under their hanging trees,
And deafened me with their sea.

Breaking a way to my heritage,
Heavy and sad was I.
Blinded with tears and bent with age,
I am come to the open sky.

HERMANN HAGEDORN

Agamemnon's Death

from "The Great Maze"

Shoulder to shoulder, scarcely breathing, cold
With an unearthly coldness, those two, merged
In one will, which was Clytaemnestra's, one
Enveloping resolve to scale the heavens
And beat the gates of high Olympus in
And fall immeasurably and be lost,
But to the end to keep the mastery
Of her own fate and never to bow down;
Those two, made one, waited for sounds like steps
Along the corridor, while through the gloom
The minutes crawled like felt but unseen ghosts,
A long procession with averted eyes.
And now the wind rose and began to shake
The window's heavy curtain and to cry,
And louder now and more insistently
The waves began to strike against the shore.
An hour they waited and another hour
And then another hour; and now the wind
Invaded the black chamber, seeking them,
And stirring horribly mute things to speech.
A dozen times they heard or thought they heard
Steps in the corridor; a dozen times
Aegisthus felt the ice upon his arm

And trembled, hearing Clytaemnestra's "Now!"
And then, before they knew that he was near
They heard the hangings rustle down, and knew
One room enclosed the three of them at last.

They heard him breathing deeply, in and out,
And then they heard him knock against a chair,
Fallen on its side, and heard him set it up,
And heard him crush a golden powder-box
Beneath his foot and feel around for it,
Murmuring something; and then heard him grope
On toward her bed again, beneath his steps
Crunching her ivory and golden bands,
And crying, "Clytaemnestra, are you there?
Are you awake? What has he done to you?"
They heard him sink beside the bed, they heard
His hands grope over it to find her face,
They heard him struggle to his feet, they heard
His choked cry, "Are you dead?"
Aegisthus twitched,
But Clytaemnestra held his arm. "Not yet,"
She whispered.
Sudden silence fell. No sound
Stirred the black death that filled the room. The wind,
Even the wind seemed to be listening,
Afraid to breathe. Then Agamemnon spoke.
"Where are you? You are somewhere in the room.
I heard you stirring somewhere. Speak."
Again
Aegisthus quivered, but again the hand

Held him with icy clutch, and at his ear
Again the dark moaned, "No, not yet."
They heard
A table thrust impulsively aside.
A Tyrian vase crashed down. "Oh, woman, woman!
Where are you hiding from me? Oh, come forth!
I have not come to hurt you. Speak to me.
You are not far. I think I hear your heart,
You are so near. But it is dark. I broke
A vase of yours. I break so many things.
Forgive. You shall have other vases. Ah!
I heard the rustling of your garment then.
Where are you hiding, Clytaemnestra? Speak.
I have not come to blame you. I who love you,
And did you grievous wrong, how should I blame you?
Life is a great maze, Clytaemnestra. You
And I were lost in it awhile. But look,
Love is the thread of it, love is the key.
We shall not walk in mazes any more.
Speak to me! Come to me!"
"Agamemnon!"
She staggered toward him with wide arms.
A hand
Thrust her aside, a thin and icy hand
Thrust her among her tables and her chairs,
Her combs and broken vases, thrust her back,
And gave the breast of Agamemnon not
A woman, but a sword.
He cried, he reeled,
He fell, thrashing, he rose, he fell. The sword
Shook itself loose and on the marble floor

Fell clattering. He fought for breath, he choked,
Trying to speak, and then reproachfully
He moaned her name, and then, "Why?" And again,
More faintly, "Why? Why?" On his breath, the word
Hung, tremulously fading. When it died,
He went with it into the windy night.

From somewhere in the world there came a cry,
Then steps and other cries, Electra's voice
And other voices out of every day,
Steps hurrying!
Across the littered floor
Blindly, toward where he lay and made no sound
In the chill blackness, Clytaemnestra drew
Her bruised and fainting body, reaching out
Quivering fingers, seeking him, and crying,
"Where are you, oh, where are you?" in low tones,
Inhuman as the wind. She lost her way,
And fell amid the shards of Tyrian glass
His hand had scattered there, and raised herself
And struggled on with bleeding body and face,
Groping through the enormous emptiness
To find a fallen king. She found a sword;
And then she found his hand across the sword,
His open eyes, his bleeding breast, his feet.
She moaned, and kissed his feet and kissed his feet.
Aegisthus staggered wildly to the window
And tore the curtain down. The moonlight fell
Whitely on Clytaemnestra where she knelt.
He stared, gasping, "Why?—Why?—Why?—"

A child groped blindly through the hangings.

Doors

Like a young child who to his mother's door
Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
A door that will not open, sick and numb,
I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing—hark!—
Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

The Ghost

One whom I loved and never can forget
Returned to me in dream, and spoke with me,
As audibly, as sweet familiarly
As though warm fingers twined warm fingers yet.
Her eyes were bright and with great wonder wet
As in old days when some strange, swift decree
Brought touch-close love or death; and sorrow-free
She spoke as one long purged of all regret.

I heard, oh, glad beyond all speech, I heard,
Till to my lips the flaming query flashed:
How is it—over there? Then, quite undone,
She trembled; in her deep eyes like a bird
The gladness fluttered, and as one abashed
She shook her head bewildered, and was gone.

Departure

My true love from her pillow rose
And wandered down the summer lane.
She left her house to the wind's carouse,
And her chamber wide to the rain.

She did not stop to don her coat,
She did not stop to smooth her bed—
But out she went in glad content
There where the bright path led.

She did not feel the beating storm,
But fled like a sunbeam, white and frail,
To the sea, to the air, somewhere, somewhere—
I have not found her trail.

FLORENCE WILKINSON EVANS

The Dead Matador

(Flamenca)

When I hear the tramp of crazy feet (Beat—beat—beat) . . . and the tropic rainfall of the hands blown across the blaze of sands, white hands whipping up and down in the plaza of the town

for Los Toros
at Burgos,
Ah Dios!

then I know that one I knew when I swaggered in God's blue

to Los Toros
at Burgos,
Ah Dios!

strides across the bloody sands—grass-green cape, the people ape, pink-and-black humanity, open-mouthed insanity—shouting:

"Ole, ole, ole,
Que diavolo de hombre!"

But my grave is a cave, cavern in a carven niche, carven name the same for poor and rich; and a skull dry and dull. "Born at Leon, Dead, twenty-one." This in the fragrant burning sun. This you could snarl in one brief breath,—

Birth and—Death. Not even that mighty one word more: "Diavolo, que Matador

at Los Toros
in Burgos,
Ah Dios!

He, that madman Rodriguez for whom ladies waste their breath, invincible and darling one, he will sit here in the sun (Yes, he too.) dry and cold, a carven niche, the same skull for poor and rich. In his marble pale retreat—(Yes, he too, as I do.) he will hear the tramping feet

to Los Toros
at Burgos,
Ah Dios!

white hands whipping to and fro, petalled snow, pink-and-black humanity, open-mouthed insanity, shouting:

"Ole, ole, ole,
Que diavolo de hombre!"

Then poor I shall fall asleep. They who live may love and give. Sword will flash and laughter leap. Rodriguez, his estocada,—Cadiz, Ronda or Granada—murmur of the clapping hands will die out upon the sands, dying wave along the shore it will trouble me no more who was once. . . Gran Matador. . . .

at Los Toros
in Burgos,
Ah Dios!

The Mule Driver (Jota Aragonese)

(El Arriero)

Perfume of the bean and flower of the leek,
And the shadow of my hat downward like a peak;
Fringed and paniered and mounted on my mule,
Striped shawl, magenta sash—when the snows are blowing cool
From the pink-tipped high sierra
On the baked red-gold tierra
To the Plaza of the town
Riding down, riding down.

Travel like a king I do, Aragon to Andalu.
Shepherd girls with nut-brown throats,
Gipsies by the ruined moats,
Lola of the golden notes,—
Golden-throated goblets, too,
Eyes in which a man may sink,
Mine to kiss and mine to drink,
Mine to tip them back and kiss;
Drink and drown myself, I do,
Aragon to Andalu.

Don Juan In Portugal

At every pelourinho's ledge
Faces to set my teeth on edge;
Gray gossips like a cactus hedge
Whisper and crackle.

I lean at Alcobaca, dim
Carved fig-leaves twisted round its rim
And Indian snakes. Pauses a slim
Tall maid. . . Her name? A Latin hymn,—

Gloria de Madre de Deus,
A white-rose face dipped tremulous,
Profile carved as nobly clear
As love-child of Aurelius.

White-clad, bare-legged, straight she stood,
Vase-bearing nymph ripe to be wooed
In some delicious interlude.

* * * *

What need now to remember more?
The tiled and twisted fountain's pour,
The vase forgotten on the floor,
The white street ending in her door.

Her head, a dark flower on its stem;
Her diadem
Of heavy hair, the Moorish low estalegem.

Outside, the stillness and white glare
Of Alcobaca's noonday square.
My hands that dare.
The beauty of her loosened hair.

White shift, white door, the white still street,—
Her lips, her arms, her throat, her feet,—
—After a while, some bread and meat.

A dewy jar of cool red wine,
Olives that glisten wet with brine.
White rose of Alcobaca, mine!
We kiss again above the wine.

The red wine drunk, the broken crust,
We parted as all lovers must.
Madre in Gloria, be Thou just
To that frail glory,
A white rose fallen into dust.

DU BOSE HEYWARD

A Yoke of Steers

A heave of mighty shoulders to the yoke,
Square, patient heads, and flaring sweep of horn;
The darkness swirling down beneath their feet
Where sleeping valleys stir, and feel the dawn;
Uncouth and primal, on and up they sway,
Taking the summit in a drench of day.
The night-winds volley upward bitter-sweet,
And the dew shatters to a rainbow spray
Under the slow-moving, cloven feet.

There is a power here that grips the mind;
A force repressed and inarticulate,
Slow as the swing of centuries, as blind
As Destiny, and as deliberate.

They will arrive in their appointed hour
Unhurried by the goad of lesser wills,
Bearing vast burdens on.

They are the great
Unconquerable spirit of these hills.

DU BOSE HEYWARD

The Mountain Girl

Life ripens swiftly in these lonely hills,
Ripens, then hangs long-withered on the bough.
Out of their ancient hates, relentless wills,
And unsaid loves, youth burgeons fierce and strong,
Eager for life when life has just begun;
Eager to spend its all, and then be done.

So, as I gaze at Dorothea now,
Windblown against the cabin's weathered side,
Defiant, flushed, with bodice blowing wide,
And rain-soaked, homespun skirt that cannot hide
The bold, strong, ardent curves of womanhood;
My exultation winces into pain.

Youth, splendid, careless, racing with the rain,
Laughing against the storm as it shouts by.
And yet, perhaps when I pass by again,
Hid from the beat of weathers, she will be
One of the sunken, burned-out lives I see
Here where the mountains shoulder to the sky.

So, as the storm goes smashing down the range,
Striking white fire from the smitten hills,
Swelling the falls and streams until it fills
The cove with giant's music, wild and strange,

The laugh she sends across the shaken air
Brings sudden tears; its very triumph sings
Of beauty so intense it cannot last
Beyond the transient day of fragile things
That brush us, like a wind from unseen wings,
And then are gathered up into the past.

DU BOSE HEYWARD

The Mountain Town

These are the days when I can love the town;
Now, when the year is clean and new and sweet.
When the great mountain schooners rumble down,
White-crested, and slow-moving, fleet on fleet,
Leading a spotted heifer, or a steer,
A rangy mule or two, a pair of hounds;
To barter for a flowered calico,
A ribbon for the red-cheeked daughter's hair,
And black tobacco for the coming year.
Now there is laughter in the open square,
Complaint of brakes, and cracking of the whips,
Loud banter while the old horse-trader's mare
Is auctioned—old songs vie with older quips.
The girls go flocking up and down the street,
A startled wonder in their hill-blue eyes,
Amazement and delight upon their lips.
Men, seeming much too large for crowding walls,
Stride down the street, and answer with a hail
The greetings of acquaintances they meet.
Boys strut the pavement in new overalls,
And trade unendingly in dogs and guns;
While wagon-hoods frame wan, madonna faces
That quiver into eager fleeting smiles,
And there is talk of undiscovered places
Above the soaring laurel-bordered miles.
Soon flame azaleas on the mountain-side
Will smolder out and die; the laurel tide
Will sway and hesitate at summer's touch.
Then they will pass, these people that I know,
And understand a little, and love much.

Creation

There is a holiness upon her as she waits
Close by the station gates.
All of the forenoon long
Hasten the restless throng;
Eyes that seem scarcely to live,
Faces with nothing to give,
Swung by the rock of the years
On to their narrow affairs.

Now women come who draw their skirts aside;
And negro porters, braced against the tide
Of beating life, shrug with a smile or sneer
Seeing her waiting there.

Where the massed shadows crawl
Out from the soaring wall
Her face shows drawn and small.
Only the eyes,
Sombre, remote, and wise,
Gaze out of aeons past
Over today to the vast
Dream of tomorrow.
All of Earth's sorrow
Lies there, and all of Earth's joy;
And the infinite patience that builds
While armies destroy.

These others who beat in a tide
Of turbulent life through the wide,
High gate, perhaps they go seeking their fate.
She needs but to wait.
What has she to do with the strife!
Her concern is of life,
Faint-stirring and small,
Biding its time till the call
Of the earth for its child,
Out of its night, to the wild,
Glad urge of its day.
So, while they go on their way,
She can wait
By the gate.

And I, who make of my brain, and my soul, and my hand,
Only a fugitive song for the mirth of the land,
Turn, as the blind must turn to the warmth of the sun,
Reverently, toward one
Who, mutely and steadfastly, up from the night and the sod,
Is shaping a life in the wonderful likeness of God.

LILLA CABOT PERRY

Three Quatrains

THE CUP

She said, "Lift high the cup!"
    Of her arm's weariness she gave no sign,
But, smiling, raised it up
    That none might see or guess it held no wine.

FORGIVE ME NOT!

Forgive me not! Hate me and I shall know
    Some of Love's fire still burns within your breast!
    Forgiveness finds its home in hearts at rest,
On dead volcanoes only lies the snow.

THE ROSE

One deep red rose I dropped into his grave,
    So small a thing to give so great a friend!
Yet well he knew it was my heart I gave
    And must fare on without it to the end.

Within and Without

(*Alcaics*)

Without all is cold with winter's austerity,
But blazing logs light all the room cheerily,
Save in the dim mysterious corners
Where the blue twilight is lost in darkness.

Beloved, your face is a beautiful battlefield,
Where blue and golden-rose strive for the mastery;
Quivering flames rising and falling
Light up your eyes and then leave them shadowed.

As all unnoticed I watch her, my Beautiful,
White slender hands enlaced, sitting there dreamily,
Her work fallen on the floor, unheeded,
Softly ensnarled by the playful kitten.

My throbbing heart leaps in my breast suddenly,
The room's too small to hold all my love of her,
I seek the outside cold and twilight
With all its limitless, darkling spaces.

I climb the hillside, filled with the infinite
Beauty of nature that speaks to my heart of her,
The mist hides all below save pine-trees
Rising above its blue sea like mast-heads.

The moon now rises slowly and solemnly;
Touched by her beauty's ever new miracle,
Alone I stand upon my island,
Looking for one to enjoy it with me.

Softly the stars now peer at me questioningly,
Looking for you. My heart, too, is calling you,
The vastness of the earth and heaven
Is but a part of my love, All-dearest. . . .

Swift the door opened, warm hands then drew me in,
Into the heart of her love and the firelight.
"Why did you leave me here, forgotten?"
"I never left you, I took you with me!"

LILLA CABOT PERRY

The Lantern

There is no moon and the night is dark,
A strong south wind blows clouds like tattered ribbons across
the sky.
Bathed in the freshness of the all-obliterating wind
I lean against a rock that is still warm with stored sunlight—
Remote and forgotten is the daylight world.

Suddenly I see a circle of light coming toward me across the
fields,
Threading its way in and out among the apple-trees,
A green moon sliding over the grass,
Then a white one as it crosses the road.
Its rays touch the hem of a white dress
And light up the leaves of low-hanging branches.
It draws near and for a moment the light is lifted up,
Showing me your face!

Your hair blown by the wind makes a halo on the darkness,
Your eyes leap to meet mine, half-startled, half-expectant.
You seem the very spirit of the wild summer night,
Answering the unconscious call of my heart.
I take the lantern from your slender hand;
Its light clashes on the darkness;
Now at a breath
It dies.

THEODORE MAYNARD

Exile

Here where the season swiftly turns
Its great wheel forward while there burns
    Red in the redwood trees;
And while the eucalyptus climbs
Above the palm trees and the limes
    By Californian seas

I think of England—and there wakes
Pain like wild roses in her brakes,
    A pain as dear as they;
That digs its roots in English earth,
And brings an English flower to birth
    Six thousand miles away.

The Downs are standing hugely drawn
Magnificent against the dawn,
    Deep black against the sky.
The first cock crows; the light leaps higher;
The Channel is a flood of fire
    And crimson suddenly.

And London, moving in her bed,
Hears on the eaves above her head
    The earlier sparrows stir.

A thin mist rises and the dew
Is thick on Hampstead and at Kew—
The dawn has greeted her.

I ache in memory, yet I know
That if I ever homeward go
I shall not ever find
In England's gentle tenderness
The rest I seek for which can bless
My tired, unquiet mind.

For though I wander through all lands,
Seeking a house not built with hands
For my eternal home,
No city in this world of men
Can claim me as a citizen
From Babylon to Rome.

Not even London, where I burned
With bliss because in her I learned
My faith, my love, my art;
Not even London, where I trod
Through crowded streets alone with God,
And anguish in my heart;

Not even London, though she stands
To me with priestly praying hands
In every dome and spire,
Can be the city of my quest,
Of infinite and final rest,
The end of all desire.

But London, London has become
A heavenly symbol and the sum
    Of all the world can give.
And English air that was my breath
Remains my mortal life, till death
    Shall set me free to live.

The apple tree's an apple still
Here or upon an English hill;
    The moon among the boughs
Is the same moon, although it went
O'er ghostly orchards far in Kent
    When noon shone on my house.

But ah, some change had come to it
Beyond my exegetic wit:
    I know not what it was;
Not as the sailor on the spars
Among the Australasian stars
    Beholds the Southern Cross—

This map of heaven I know by rote.
But something struggled at my throat:
    Wonder or fear or awe.
Though indistinct and vague that change,
A light unearthly, dim and strange
    Was cast on all I saw.

The Roman poplars in their lines
Like Roman soldiers, Roman vines—
    These I had known of old.

And here in evidence the plain
And iron intellect of Spain,
    Her fury hot and cold.

But these are exiles, too, whose need
Has clung and stiffened round the Creed
    Which made them clear and strong.
Though far from Europe, here they keep
Her name remembered in their sleep,
    And in their classic song.

The apple tree remembers how
Her blossoms burgeoned on her bough
    By little English streams;
And how the cider-drinking men
Were mighty with the sword and pen,
    And mightiest in their dreams.

The poplar and the olive know
How like an arrow from a bow
    The Roman road was shot;
How Roman law and Roman Pope
Brought order and outrageous hope
    To those who had them not.

And these blunt arches, innocent
Of Gothic's mystical intent—
    Enormous, squat, secure—
Remember how in fierce disdain
The broken chivalry of Spain
    Broke at the last the Moor.

Aware that power, the most august,
Is journeying only to the dust,
    Their eyes though brave are sad:
Aware that all is vanity,
Their eyes look upward where they see
    The sight that makes them glad:

That city which, in more than pride,
Their kings and architects have tried
    To build and nobly failed;
A city which should correspond
To that bright city seen beyond
    The point where sunlight paled;

The dream that lures and still eludes
The genius of men's highest moods,
    But draws them on and on—
Though Time destroys their stoutest walls
And though their tallest turret falls
    To dark oblivion.

The giant masonry shall pass,
The palaces be mounds of grass—
    And yet not all in vain
That energy of brain and bone,
Though no stone on another stone
    Shall ever stand again.

I well may join the cry with them,
"If I forget Jerusalem . . ."
    I who shall not forget

My holy city, made more fair
By distance and the alien air
    Wherein my life is set.

If London come to empty loss,
And jackals wail at Charing Cross;
    And if at Westminster
The lizards crawl about each niche,
And she be poor who once was rich—
    I shall remember her.

For I divine with what in mind
The Abbey windows were designed,
    Her pavements were laid down;
And how her streets were meant to go
Beyond the steeple bells of Bow
    To the celestial Town.

And so beside the Golden Gate
A gate of purer gold I wait,
    A more resplendent wall
Than London's—daring now to lift
My voice to praise God's bitter gift,
    Exile, the best of all.

Ode In Time Of Doubt

I

Night: and the skies are cavernous black;
The wild winds silent, though I seem to feel
Rather than hear their noiseless footsteps steal,

The whispers of their dark conspiracy
To lash to fury and a stormy wrack
This ocean sullen as a stagnant pool.
Lying awake, I listen to its breath
Rising and falling like a sleeping beast's,
Of one that, having eaten full,
In mimic death is unafraid of death.
But when it shall awaken
Beneath tormenting hands in agony,
Then will the air be shaken
With cries for all it knows as good—
With shrill and frenzied cries for blood,
Loud as those uttered by the raving priests
Of some enormous savage deity
Whose thirst's unslaken.

II

Oh, now there is no hint of that old mild
Wordsworthian nature, that a child
Finds in a meadow, but a dread obscene
Rapacious monster, which will tear
All the bright loveliness that has ever been
Limb from limb in its lair!

III

At such an hour no dreams can comfort me;
Nor can I slip in sweet oblivion
Into the cool waters of a fairy sea.
Delusive joys are gone;
And in my bitterness I loathe
The treacherous imagination that could both

Create and relish what it had created.
Now are there stripped away
The tinselled cloak of day,
The painted mask so often worn by night;
And truth, the pitiless,
Stares straight into my drawn, affrighted face.
With pleasant lies my soul is sated:
With all the fair illusion of delight,
The ignorance of happiness;
With all, that lacking substance, takes on seeming . . .
And yet, and yet if truth had untruth's grace—
Or this were only dreaming!

IV

I know the immitigable hour to be
A symbol of our weary, frightened age,
A microcosm of our world, epitome
Of all we hold as our poor heritage—
Our spirits' gloom,
Shut in a narrow room,
While in the nether night the North-winds rage
And bang against the fastened shutters.
The fire has burned to ashes in the grate;
The candle slowly gutters;
And I am left alone,
As cold as the coldest stone,
Empty of noble love and noble hate,
Empty of all the passion of belief,
Of ardour and of indignation,
Incapable of Joy or her twin sister Grief

(And who shall say which is more fair
Or potent for the soul's transfiguration?)
I only have despair.

V

But, ah, more grievous still!
How shall man's paralysed and shackled will
Onset and overcome—
Now that the ringing cries of hope are dumb—
The captain evils that have him in thrall?
Although the strongest tyranny would fall
Would he but lift the ensign of revolt
The tempered metal of his chain were forged in vain;
The flashing of his eyes would be as swords
'Gainst which all hostile hordes
Would break and run precipitously,
As though before the bronze Olympian bolt.
Let him but give one glance of hot disdain,
And he shall shout for liberty!

VI

Alas! I see the slave content,
Infamous and innocent
Of the quick flame that thrills along the veins
And, burning, blesses him who would be free.
Yet fearing to accept the pains
Of pure and purifying fire
Accompanying the rapture of desire—
Which is the pang of sanctity—
He shuns desire as saints shun sin.
The difficult hope at enmity with ease,

The passionate discipline
That nerves the soul who, daring much,
Believes—all these he ventures not to touch;
But having made a desert calls it peace.

VII

All that was once a mystery come to flower
Has now the steady throb of a machine,
By which the soul stands watching hour by hour,
Pulling the levers, keeping bearings clean—
For never, thinks she, has she seen
A higher energy than this,
So dulls she spiritual hunger and the bliss
Of beauty making trouble in the heart,
Stinging the will to exercise of art.
Since man discrowned his gods,
Authors of starry night and early morning,
They wreak their vengeance with their hardest rods—
And make him impotent to capture
Spring's secret or his old religious rapture . . .
But man is unremindful of the warning.

VIII

His engines lift laboriously on high
Huge towers against an empty sky.
Stark steel holds up its loveless head,
Magnificent and dead—
The first of skulls that never grinned!
His handiwork is mirthless;
For energy, grown sad, is worthless

However high it leaps into the wind.
Man's empty architecture is unlit
With laughter, joy, or gay audacious wit—
Since man has sinned, has sinned,
Allowing doubt to eat his heart away.
His heart is heavy and grey.

IX

Has he no memory how the streets ran red
When treason stained the charter of the guild,
When man not iron held up an iron head?
When happiness and holy laughter filled
His life and lips with song?
Has he no memory of the wrong
The cunning prophets did him who destroyed
The living creed that he enjoyed?
He once went soaring like a bird in air—
Like a lark singing, like an eagle strong—
Which drew up, rather than builded up, the stair
Whereon his spirit gambolled into prayer,
Lifting, as a church its spire,
Another voice in the ecstatic choir
To pierce the heavens, sharp with strong desire.

X

I, lying in a darkened room awake
And waiting for the tempest to begin,
Can have no comfort till these lead clouds break
And let the lurid sword of lightning in:
Such surely is the end of sin!

That God pours forth
The vials of His concentrated wrath,
Of which this gathering storm is but the type—
To purge with terror those who know no love,
And, lacking love, no joy;
'Gainst whom He will deploy
Angelic armies and the chiefs thereof.
The time is ripe, O God, the time is ripe!

XI

I am the child of this unhappy age;
I have known doubt that saps the mind and will;
My eyes have pored o'er many a pedant's page,
And I have heard them speaking cold and shrill—
With that incessant talking in my ears,
I heard a thrush at evening thrill
The listening wood with wonder;
And my heart travelled back ten thousand years,
Back, back to Eden's leafy glade,
To man's first laughter and to man's first tears:
All else is vain . . . Now lightning draw your blade,
Break thunder!

LOLA RIDGE

Jaguar

Nasal intonations of light
and clicking tongues . . .
publicity of windows
stoning me with pent-up cries . . .
smells of abattoirs . . .
smells of long-dead meat.

Some day-end—
while the sand is yet cozy as a blanket
Off the warm body of a squaw,
and the jaguars are out to kill . . .
with a blue-black night coming on
and a painted cloud
stalking the first star—
I shall go alone into the Silence . . .
the coiled Silence . . .
where a cry can run only a little way
and waver and dwindle
and be lost.

And there . . .
where tiny antlers clinch and strain
as life grapples in a million avid points,
and threshing things

strike and die,
letting their hate live on
in the spreading purple of a wound . . .
I too
will make covert of a crevice in the night,
and turn and watch . . .
nose at the cleft's edge.

Wild Duck

I

That was a great night we spied upon
See-sawing home,
Singing a hot sweet song to the super-stars
Shuffling off behind the smoke-haze . . .
Fog-horns sentimentalizing on the river . . .
Lights dwindling to shining slits
In the wet asphalt . . .
Purring lights . . . red and green and golden-
whiskered . . .
Digging daintily pointed claws in the soft mud . . .
But you did not know . . .
As the trains made golden augers
Boring in the darkness . . .
How my heart kept racing out along the rails,
As a spider runs along a thread
And hauls him in again
To some drawing point . . .
You did not know
How wild ducks' wings

Itch at dawn . . .
How at dawn the necks of wild ducks
Arch to the sun
And new-mown air
Trickles sweet in their gullets.

II

As water, cleared of the reflection of a bird
That has lately flown across it,
Yet trembles with the beating of its wings,
So my soul . . . emptied of the known you . . .
utterly . . .
Is yet vibrant with the cadence of the song
You might have ' een . . .
'Twas a great night . . .
With never a waste look over a shoulder
Curved to the crook of the wind . . .
And a great word we threw
For memory to play knuckles with . . .
A word the waters of the world have washed,
Leaving it stark and without smell . . .
A world that rattles well in emptiness:
Good-by.

To E. A. R.

Centuries shall not deflect
nor many suns
absorb your stream,
flowing immune and cold
between the banks of snow.
Nor any wind
carry the dust of cities
to your high waters
that arise out of the peaks
and return again into the mountain
and never descend.

HARDWICKE NEVIN

Soissons

Over these winter wastes where broke the wars
Now falls the weary night. And once again
High in the hollow dusk burn the great stars,
Like rockets rise and gleam—upon the Aisne.
Over the buried dead no brown leaves hover;
No spring-scents linger. In her death-hung lair
Here autumn mourned alone the passing year
And wailed unto the moon that all was over.

Peace like a snow has feathered down and sighed,
And swung the living heart to a far height.
From wastes a-flash with guns these hearts that died
Have taken wing for some great evening flight
On vaster pinions of the Soul; to skies
Of spring, brown autumn leaves—and memories.

What A Little Boy Told Me He Did Playing Hookey

I put my lips to the rose and chewed its leaves;
I shook a squirrel down, and tore my pants;
I went in for a swim; and pulled corn sheaves
To get some silk and smoke it at the ants:
Then in a tree-top very comfortable
I hollered to a lady; "Go to hell!"

BELLE MCDIARMID RITCHEY

I Shall Not Weep

"Or, to be old, perhaps, is not to care."
Edward D. Kennedy.

I shall not weep when you are gone;
I shall not miss you over-much.
I shall not grieve for kiss or touch
Or speech with you. These, in the dawn
Of love's awakening, held back wan
Terror, fear of loss, mad jealousy,
And mutinous flutterings to be free
From fetters, e'er so gently drawn.

They'll say I am too old to care;
That trivial things my days beguile;
Youth knows so little. I shall smile,
Remembering jokes we used to share,
Unending argument, and flare
Of sudden temper; all the ways of Love
To prove its strength, to grow above
The need to see you sitting there.

I shall not weep when you are gone,
Nor shall I miss you . . . over-much.

EDWIN CARTY RANCK

Edwin Arlington Robinson

The world is what it is, no more nor less;
And we who live in it and laugh or sigh
Must walk the plank while other ships go by
With men aboard in search of happiness,
Fleeing before the lash of life's duress.
And so, jeered on by pirate laughs, we die,
And raise bewildered faces to a sky
That seems to mock our haltered helplessness.

God may be in his heaven; I don't know,
But we are dust of destiny, no more.
And when the winds of passion cease to blow,
Like dust we settle down upon the floor,
And then the housemaid comes into the room
And drives us forth with deft and busy broom.

ELOISE ROBINSON

To-day I Saw Bright Ships

To-day I saw bright ships come swinging home
In the proud, magic beauty of their bows;
I will not say again that dust can house
You who were singing with them through the foam.
You loved them once, for blue ways they would roam,
Hazarding great wild winds upon their prows,
And rough old seas that would with them espouse—
For silks and jade, red wine and honeycomb.
I will not wrong so your adventurous soul,
Thinking you lie in dreams and do forget
White spume across the deck, wind in the spars.
Death was a harbor and a transient goal
Wherefrom you pass now, with your skysail set
For ports beyond the margin of the stars.

Already That Old Time

Already that old time we went in, now
    Is like a little town built by the sea;
Our ship has cast her moorings and her prow
    Slides backward silently along the quay.
It was our own, once, where we passed the days;
    It is a strange place now. We can but screen

Dim eyes that follow with an aching gaze;
The peaked red roofs fade, walls blur, and green
Low hills sink in the ocean one by one.
Though they were near to us, nothing of all
These things shall be—no wide square drenched in sun.
No idling fishers by the red sea wall;
We shall not buy nor eat there—not again
Sleep while its low eaves whisper with the rain.

I Loved You Not For Your Rich Self

I loved you not for your rich self alone
But that I kept such other things in you;
Your beauty held all beauty in its own
As cups hold water, as the sky holds blue.
April and dawn and buds upon the earth,
All the immortal magics of past springs,
These were in you invested as by birth
The rights of God were innate in old kings
With lovely passions that had taken track
To sepulchres unfathomably deep,
Till every night I lingered and looked back,
For you were dreams more exquisite than sleep;
And since you thought it well to drink this breath,
So, too, at last, I have made friends with death.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Rembrandt To Rembrandt

(*Amsterdam*, 1645)

And there you are again, now as you are.
Observe yourself as you discern yourself
In your discredited ascendency;
Without your velvet or your feathers now,
Commend your new condition to your fate,
And your conviction to the sieves of time.
Meanwhile appraise yourself, Rembrandt van Ryn,
Now as you are—formerly more or less
Distinguished in the civil scenery,
And once a painter. There you are again,
Where you may see that you have on your shoulders
No lovelier burden for an ornament
Than one man's head that's yours. Praise be to God
That you have that; for you are like enough
To need it now, my friend, and from now on;
For there are shadows and obscurities
Immediate or impending on your view,
That may be worse than you have ever painted
For the bewildered and unhappy scorn
Of injured Hollanders in Amsterdam
Who cannot find their fifty florins' worth
Of Holland face where you have hidden it
In your new golden shadow that excites them.

Or see that when the Lord made color and light
He made not one thing only, or believe
That shadows are not nothing. Saskia said,
Before she died, how they would swear at you,
And in commiseration at themselves.
She laughed a little, too, to think of them—
And then at me. . . . That was before she died.

And I could wonder, as I look at you,
There as I have you now, there as you are,
Or nearly so as any skill of mine
Has ever caught you in a bilious mirror,—
Yes, I could wonder long, and with a reason,
If all but everything achievable
In me were not achieved and lost already,
Like a fool's gold But you there in the glass,
And you there on the canvas, have a sort
Of solemn doubt about it; and that's well
For Rembrandt and for Titus. All that's left
Of all that was is here; and all that's here
Is one man who remembers, and one child
Beginning to forget. One, two, and three,
The others died, and then—then Saskia died;
And then, so men believe, the painter died.
So men believe. So it all comes at once.
And here's a fellow painting in the dark,—
A loon who cannot see that he is dead
Before God lets him die. He paints away
At the impossible, so Holland has it,
For venom or for spite, or for defection,
Or else for God knows what. Well, if God knows,

And Rembrandt knows, it matters not so much
What Holland knows or cares. If Holland wants
Its heads all in a row, and all alike,
There's Franz to do them and to do them well—
Rat-catchers, archers, or apothecaries,
And one as like a rabbit as another.
Value received, and every Dutchman happy.
All's one to Franz, and to the rest of them,—
Their ways being theirs, are theirs.—But you, my friend,
If I have made you something as you are,
Will need those jaws and eyes and all the fight
And fire that's in them, and a little more,
To take you on and the world after you;
For now you fare alone, without the fashion
To sing you back and fling a flower or two
At your accusing feet. Poor Saskia saw
This coming that has come, and with a guile
Of kindliness that covered half her doubts
Would give me gold, and laugh . . . before she died.

And if I see the road that you are going,
You that are not so jaunty as aforetime,
God knows if she were not appointed well
To die. She might have wearied of it all
Before the worst was over, or begun.
A woman waiting on a man's avouch
Of the invisible, may not wait always
Without a word betweenwhiles, or a dash
Of poison on his faith. Yes, even she.
She might have come to see at last with others,
And then to say with others, who say more,

That you are groping on a phantom trail
Determining a dusky way to nowhere;
That errors unconfessed and obstinate
Have teemed and cankered in you for so long
That even your eyes are sick, and you see light
Only because you dare not see the dark
That is around you and ahead of you.
She might have come, by ruinous estimation
Of old applause and outworn vanities,
To clothe you over in a shroud of dreams,
And so be nearer to the counterfeit
Of her invention than aware of yours.
She might, as well as any, by this time,
Unwillingly and eagerly have bitten
Another devil's-apple of unrest,
And so, by some attendant artifice
Or other, might anon have had you sharing
A taste that would have tainted everything,
And so had been for two, instead of one,
The taste of death in life—which is the food
Of art that has betrayed itself alive
And is a food of hell. She might have heard
Unhappily the temporary noise
Of louder names than yours, and on frail urns
That hardly will ensure a dwelling-place
For even the dust that may be left of them,
She might, and angrily, as like as not,
Look soon to find your name, not finding it.
She might, like many another born for joy
And for sufficient fulness of the hour,
Go famishing by now, and in the eyes

Of pitying friends and dwindling satellites
Be told of no uncertain dereliction
Touching the cold offence of my decline.
And even if this were so, and she were here
Again to make a fact of all my fancy,
How should I ask of her to see with me
Through night where many a time I seem in vain
To seek for new assurance of a gleam
That comes at last, and then, so it appears,
Only for you and me—and a few more,
Perchance, albeit their faces are not many
Among the ruins that are now around us.
That was a fall, my friend, we had together—
Or rather it was my house, mine alone,
That fell, leaving you safe. Be glad for that.
There's life in you that shall outlive my clay
That's for a time alive and will in time
Be nothing—but not yet. You that are there
Where I have painted you are safe enough,
Though I see dragons. Verily, that was a fall—
A dislocating fall, a blinding fall,
A fall indeed. But there are no bones broken;
And even the teeth and eyes that I make out
Among the shadows, intermittently,
Show not so firm in their accoutrement
Of terror-laden unreality
As you in your neglect of their performance,—
Though for their season we must humor them
For what they are: devils undoubtedly,
But not so parlous and implacable
In their undoing of poor human triumph

As easy fashion—or brief novelty
That ails even while it grows, and like sick fruit
Falls down anon to an indifferent earth
To break with inward rot. I say all this,
And I concede, in honor of your silence,
A waste of innocent facility
In tints of other colors than are mine.
I cannot paint with words, but there's a time
For most of us when words are all we have
To serve our stricken souls. And here you say,
"Be careful, or you may commit your soul
Soon to the very devil of your denial."
I might have wagered on you to say that,
Knowing that I believe in you too surely
To spoil you with a kick or paint you over.

No, my good friend, Mynheer Rembrandt van Ryn—
Sometime a personage in Amsterdam,
But now not much—I shall not give myself
To be the sport of any dragon-spawn
Of Holland, or elsewhere. Holland was hell
Not long ago, and there were dragons then
More to be fought than any of these we see
That we may foster now. They are not real,
But not for that the less to be regarded;
For there are slimy tyrants born of nothing
That harden slowly into seeming life
And have the strength of madness. I confess,
Accordingly, the wisdom of your care
That I look out for them. Whether I would
Or not, I must; and here we are as one

With our necessity. For though you loom
A little harsh in your respect of time
And circumstance, and of ordained eclipse,
We know together of a golden flood
That with its overflow shall drown away
The dikes that held it; and we know thereby
That in its rising light there lives a fire
No devils that are lodging here in Holland
Shall put out wholly, or much agitate,
Except in unofficial preparation
They put out first the sun. It's well enough
To think of them; wherefore I thank you, sir,
Alike for your remembrance and attention.

But there are demons that are longer-lived
Than doubts that have a brief and evil term
To congregate among the futile shards
And architraves of eminent collapse.
They are a many-favored family,
All told, with not a misbegotten dwarf
Among the rest that I can love so little
As one occult abortion in especial
Who perches on a picture (when it's done)
And says, "What of it, Rembrandt, if you do?"
This incubus would seem to be a sort
Of chorus, indicating, for our good,
The silence of the few friends that are left:
"What of it, Rembrandt, even if you know?"
It says again; "and you don't know for certain.
What if in fifty or a hundred years
They find you out? You may have gone meanwhile

So greatly to the dogs that you'll not care
Much what they find. If this be all you are—
This unaccountable aspiring insect—
You'll sleep as easy in oblivion
As any sacred monk or parricide;
And if, as you conceive, you are eternal,
Your soul may laugh, remembering (if a soul
Remembers) your befrenzied aspiration
To smear with certain ochres and some oil
A few more perishable ells of cloth,
And once or twice, to square your vanity,
Prove it was you alone that should achieve
A mortal eye—that may, no less, tomorrow
Show an immortal reason why today
Men see no more. And what's a mortal eye
More than a mortal herring, who has eyes
As well as you? Why not paint herrings, Rembrandt?
Or if not herrings, why not a split beef?
Perceive it only in its unalloyed
Integrity, and you may find in it
A beautified accomplishment no less
Indigenous than one that appertains
To gentlemen and ladies eating it.
The same God planned and made you, beef and human;
And one, but for His whim, might be the other."

That's how he says it, Rembrandt, if you listen;
He says it, and he goes. And then, sometimes,
There comes another spirit in his place—
One with a more engaging argument,
And with a softer note for saying truth

Not soft. Whether it be the truth or not,
I name it so; for there's a string in me
Somewhere that answers—which is natural,
Since I am but a living instrument
Played on by powers that are invisible.
"You might go faster, if not quite so far,"
He says, "if in your vexed economy
There lived a faculty for saying yes
And meaning no, and then for doing neither;
But since Apollo sees it otherwise,
Your Dutchmen, who are swearing at you still
For your pernicious filching of their florins,
May likely curse you down their generation,
Not having understood there was no malice
Or grinning evil in a golden shadow
That shall outshine their slight identities
And hold their faces when their names are nothing.
But this, as you discern, or should by now
Surmise, for you is neither here nor there:
You made your picture as your demon willed it;
That's about all of that. Now make as many
As may be to be made,—for so you will,
Whatever the toll may be, and hold your light
So that you see, without so much to blind you
As even the cobweb-flash of a misgiving,
Assured and certain that if you see right
Others will have to see—albeit their seeing
Shall irk them out of their serenity
For such a time as umbrage may require.
But there are many reptiles in the night
That now is coming on, and they are hungry;

And there's a Rembrandt to be satisfied
Who never will be, howsoever much
He be assured of an ascendency
That has not yet a shadow's worth of sound
Where Holland has its ears. And what of that?
Have you the weary leisure or sick wit
That breeds of its indifference a false envy
That is the vermin on accomplishment?
Are you inaugurating your new service
With fasting for a food you would not eat?
You are the servant, Rembrandt, not the master,—
But you are not assigned with other slaves
That in their freedom are the most in fear.
One of the few that are so fortunate
As to be told their task and to be given
A skill to do it with a tool too keen
For timid safety, bow your elected head
Under the stars tonight, and whip your devils
Each to his nest in hell. Forget your days,
And so forgive the years that may not be
So many as to be more than you may need
For your particular consistency
In your peculiar folly. You are counting
Some fewer years than forty at your heels;
And they have not pursued your gait so fast
As your oblivion—which has beaten them,
And rides now on your neck like an old man
With iron shins and fingers. Let him ride
(You haven't so much to say now about that),
And in a proper season let him run.
You may be dead then, even as you may now

Anticipate some other mortal strokes
Attending your felicity; and for that,
Oblivion heretofore has done some running
Away from graves, and will do more of it."

That's how it is your wiser spirit speaks,
Rembrandt. If you believe him, why complain?
If not, why paint? And why, in any event,
Look back for the old joy and the old roses,
Or the old fame? They are all gone together,
And Saskia with them; and with her left out,
They would avail no more now than one strand
Of Samson's hair wound round his little finger
Before the temple fell. Nor more are you
In any sudden danger to forget
That in Apollo's house there are no clocks
Or calendars to say for you in time
How far you are away from Amsterdam,
Or that the one same law that bids you see
Where now you see alone forbids in turn
Your light from Holland eyes till Holland ears
Are told of it; for that way, my good fellow,
Is one way more to death. If at the first
Of your long turning, which may still be longer
Than even your faith has measured it, you sigh
For distant welcome that may not be seen,
Or wayside shouting that will not be heard,
You may as well accommodate your greatness
To the convenience of an easy ditch,
And, anchored there with all your widowed gold,
Forget your darkness in the dark, and hear
No longer the cold wash of Holland scorn.

Monadnock Through The Trees

Before there was in Egypt any sound
Of those who reared a more prodigious means
For the self-heavy sleep of kings and queens
Than hitherto had mocked the most renowned,—
Unvisioned here and waiting to be found,
Alone, amid remote and older scenes,
You loomed above ancestral evergreens
Before there were the first of us around.

And when the last of us, if we know how,
See farther from ourselves than we do now,
Assured with other sight than heretofore
That we have done our mortal best and worst,—
Your calm will be the same as when the first
Assyrians went howling south to war.

Mr. Flood's Party

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
Over the hill between the town below
And the forsaken upland hermitage
That held as much as he should ever know
On earth again of home, paused warily.
The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"

Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,
The last word wavered; and the song being done,
He raised again the jug regretfully
And shook his head, and was again alone.
There was not much that was ahead of him,
And there was nothing in the town below—
Where strangers would have shut the many doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

Veteran Sirens

The ghost of Ninon would be sorry now
To laugh at them, were she to see them here,
So brave and so alert for learning how
To fence with reason for another year.

Age offers a far comelier diadem
Than theirs; but anguish has no eye for grace,
When time's malicious mercy cautions them
To think a while of number and of space.

The burning hope, the worn expectancy,
The martyred humor, and the maimed allure,
Cry out for time to end his levity,
And age to soften its investiture;

But they, though others fade and are still fair,
Defy their fairness and are unsubdued;
Although they suffer, they may not forswear
The patient ardor of the unpursued.

Poor flesh, to fight the calendar so long;
Poor vanity, so quaint and yet so brave;
Poor folly, so deceived and yet so strong,
So far from Ninon and so near the grave.

Fragment

Faint white pillars that seem to fade
As you look from here are the first one sees
Of his house where it hides and dies in a shade
Of beeches and oaks and hickory trees.
Now many a man, given woods like these,
And a house like that, and the Briony gold,
Would have said, "There are still some gods to please,
And houses are built without hands, we're told."

There are the pillars, and all gone gray.
Briony's hair went white. You may see
Where the garden was if you come this way.
That sun-dial scared him, he said to me;
"Sooner or later they strike," said he,
And he never got that from the books he read.
Others are flourishing, worse than he,
But he knew too much for the life he led.

And who knows all knows everything
That a patient ghost at last retrieves;
There's more to be known of his harvesting
When Time the thresher unbinds the sheaves;
And there's more to be heard than a wind that grieves
For Briony now in this ageless oak,
Driving the first of its withered leaves
Over the stones where the fountain broke.

AGNES RYAN

The Scythe

I am the Scythe.
All winter have I hung in the barn,
Fearing the wet and the rust.
Now I feel my edge,
And I long for Spring—
Spring and Summer!
I wonder: Is the new tender grass
Yet started under the snow?
I hunger for it now,
With a blade sharp and unflinching.
All Winter have I heard
Its gentle swish, swish,
Sighing, sighing, as it falls.
None awaits the Spring—and the tender grass—
As do I, for I am the Scythe.

The Starry Night

Yes, leave me.
I was never used to love.
Go your blithe way,
And look not back at me.
The starry night is over us.
Go swiftly, singing.

AGNES RYAN

The Corn

The rain is over
And I must hoe the corn.
The tassels soon will be showing;
The reddening silk will peep out of the ears,
And milk will flow into the kernels.
Each stalk is like a maiden
Coming to womanhood.
The sewing and the other work
Will have to wait.
The growing corn needs the hoe
To let air and sun and moisture
Down to the roots.
Then the kernels will fill
Full of sweet white milk.

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

Magic Flame

A candle suddenly pierced the night
Where our young curlyhead lay sleeping.
He woke, half dazzled by the light;
Then we saw creeping
Into the mystery of those sleep-dimmed eyes
The dawn of deep surprise,
As he beheld the draught-blown flicker leaping.

He crowed and clapped his hands in ecstasy
And held them forth to capture
And to caress that thing of rapture.
Thereat, in the exuberance of his pleasure,
Swaying he rose and trod a rude, instinctive measure.
So, on the earthen floor
Of his primaeval dwelling,
Might dance a stone-age man in Labrador.

And then, as we
Watched our light-drunken boy
And felt his gaiety upwelling,
Faintly we seemed to hear
Vibrating down the ages, wild and clear,
Reverberations of the primal joy
Our savage fathers knew when first

Into a bleak and groping world there came,
And on their bodies beat,
The power and glory of Promethean heat,
And on their spirits burst
The magic flower of flame;
And life surged half a heaven higher
As man began his awed, ecstatic dance
Around that new born radiance,
His first home fire.

To K. De N. S.

I. HARVEST

They heard that she was dying, and they came,
The reticent New England village folk,
And wrestled with their tongues and, stammering, spoke
Their very hearts, torn betwixt love and shame.
The wheelwright brought a crock of flowering flame
And, with moist eyes, said: "Madam, ef a stroke
O' the axe could save ye—(and this ain't no joke)—
I'd cut my right hand off to do that same!"
When her white soul had sped the fisherman rowed
A fare of fish—his parting gift—ashore,
And choked upon the words: "I never knowed
No one I liked so well as her afore."
And the charwoman sobbed: "'Twas me she showed
How not to get downhearted any more."

II. SAFE

Now shall your beauty never fade,
For it was budding when you passed
From out this glare into the shade
Of fairer gardens unforecast,
Where, by the gardener's dreaded spade,
Beauty, transplanted once, will ever last.

Now never shall your glorious breast
Wither, your deft hands lose their art,
Nor those proud shoulders be oppressed
By failing breath or fluttering heart,
Nor, from the cheek by dawn possessed,
The subtle ecstasy of hue depart.

For ever shall you be your best;—
Nay, far more luminously shine
Than when our comradeship was blessed
By what on earth seemed most divine,
Before your body passed to rest
With what I then supposed this heart of mine.

As you sweep on from power to power
Shall every earthward thought you think
Irradiate my lonely hour
Until I taste the golden drink
Of life, and see the full-blown flower
Whose opening bud was mine beyond the brink.

III. THE WINE OF GOD

I used to dream the Heavenly wine
Would not be mine
Until the weeds of death had darkened well
The ruins of my fleshly citadel.

But ever since you went away
Out of that so divinely moulded clay,
And raised my spirit up
To catch the sight
Of you with the glad seraphim at play,—
Now, every night,
I taste the wine of God from your own cup,
And feel it glow within me all the day.

IV. BEFORE THE GREAT ADVENTURE

Think not of me as one whom death could cheat
    Of what men hold on Earth supremely good;
    Save for the miracle of fatherhood,
I have known all that makes a life complete:
Summits where poetry lies at music's feet;
    Nature's brown breast within the autumn wood;
    The uttermost bounty of love's plenitude;
Hours when the God in me and Godhead meet.
But think of me as one solely content
    To wait on Earth a desolate while alone,
Nor hasten forth where dying footsteps went,—
    That he might spend his brain and blood and bone
In the great cause, and, having fully spent,
    Leap to the arms forevermore his own.

Divers

Clad in thick mail he stumbles down the floor
    Of the dark primaeval ocean;—on his head
    A casque more gross than ever helmeted
Crusader against Saracen. Before
His glass-dimmed eyes dart shapes like fiends of yore,
    Or like malignant spirits of the dead,
    To snatch and snap the line where through is fed
A meagre air to that strange visitor.
Stumbling we grope and stifle here below
    In the gross garb of this too cumbering flesh,
        And draw such hard-won breaths as may be drawn,
Until, perchance with pearls, we rise and go
    To doff our diver's mail and taste the fresh,
        The generous winds of the eternal dawn.

KATHRYN WHITE RYAN

Deported

The transports move stealthily to sea—
The sea so prone to take strange freightage eagerly—
But this sad freightage even the sea disowns
And lifts its storms and frowns in darker mood
And never was a cargo more adrift . . .
There are no ports, no country's flag, no waiting hands
In any land on earth for it.
Nor any home to take it in.
And all the prisons are too proud.

O Mayflower! Ships of Columbus!
And frigates and vessels of wood and of steel,
With your cargoes of gifts and your graces!
O swift laughing sails like fluttering garments of girls
Running down soft green slopes
To a dance with their lovers at Fair time!
O all the brave prows that advance to these shores
Like believers to the rail at communion!
Be blind! Turn away from those ships, from those spectres.
Do not think these the cargoes we send *out* from our shores,
These of the darkness, in the night, in secrecy,
Under sealed orders!

O Liberty! Mother! with your head proudly erect
And your regal brow confident
And your uplifted arm
Hailing far children of earth to your sheltering;
O Liberty! Mother who nurses back to full strength
The offspring of breasts that are empty,
Who gives and who trusts and who welcomes in limitless trusting!
Do not look down at these ships as they pass—
Purring like cats that are clawing their kill—
Oh, do not notice!

ALAN SEEGER

Bellinglise

I

Deep in the sloping forest that surrounds
The head of a green valley that I know,
Spread the fair gardens and ancestral grounds
Of Bellinglise, the beautiful château.
Through shady groves and fields of unmown grass,
It was my joy to come at dusk and see,
Filling a little pond's untroubled glass,
Its antique towers and mouldering masonry.
Oh, should I fall to-morrow, lay me here,
That o'er my tomb, with each reviving year,
Wood-flowers may blossom and the wood-doves croon;
And lovers by that unrecorded place,
Passing, may pause, and cling a little space,
Close-bosomed, at the rising of the moon.

II

Here, where in happier times the huntsman's horn
Echoing from far made sweet midsummer eves,
Now serried cannon thunder night and morn,
Tearing with iron the greenwood's tender leaves.
Yet has sweet Spring no particle withdrawn
Of her old bounty; still the song-birds hail,
Even through our fusillade, delightful Dawn;
Even in our wire bloom lilies of the vale.

You who love flowers, take these; their fragile bells
Have trembled with the shock of volleyed shells,
And in black nights when stealthy foes advance
They have been lit by the pale rockets' glow
That o'er scarred fields and ancient towns laid low
Trace in white fire the brave frontiers of France.

Do You Remember Once . . .

Do you remember once, in Paris of glad faces,
The night we wandered off under the third moon's rays
And, leaving far behind bright streets and busy places,
Stood where the Seine flowed down between its quiet quais?

The city's voice was hushed; the placid, lustrous waters
Mirrored the walls across where orange windows burned.
Out of the starry south provoking rumors brought us
Far promise of the spring already northward turned.

And breast drew near to breast, and round its soft desire
My arm uncertain stole and clung there unrepelled.
I thought that nevermore my heart would hover nigher
To the last flower of bliss that Nature's garden held.

There, in your beauty's sweet abandonment to pleasure,
The mute, half-open lips and tender, wondering eyes,
I saw embodied first smile back on me the treasure
Long sought across the seas and back of summer skies.

Vivien

Her eyes under their lashes were blue pools
Fringed round with lilies; her bright hair unfurled
Clothed her as sunshine clothes the summer world.
Her robes were gauzes—gold and green and gules,
All furry things flocked round her, from her hand
Nibbling their foods and fawning at her feet.
Two peacocks watched her where she made her seat
Beside a fountain in Broceliande.
Sometimes she sang . . . Whoever heard forgot
Errand and aim, and knights at noontide here,
Riding from fabulous gestes beyond the seas,
Would follow, tranced, and seek . . . and find her not . . .
But wake that night, lost, by some woodland mere,
Powdered with stars and rimmed with silent trees.

EUNICE TIETJENS

The Most Sacred Mountain

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow
six thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks
of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor
of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.
Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow
curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity—a swift, white peace, a
presence manifest.
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the
end that has no end.

Here when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before
the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus into timeless-
ness.
The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says:
*On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness
of the world below.*

The stone grows old.
Eternity
Is not for stones.

But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white peace, this stinging exultation;
And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close, and always I shall feel time ravel thin about me;
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.

Tai Shan

The Drug Clerk

The drug clerk stands behind the counter,
Young and dapper, debonair . . .

Before him burn the great unwinking lights,
The hectic stars of city nights,
Red as hell's pit, green as a mermaid's hair.
A queer half acrid smell is in the air.
Behind him on the shelves in ordered rows
With strange abbreviated names
Dwell half the facts of life. That young man knows
Bottled and boxed and powdered here
Dumb tragedies, deceptions, secret shames,
And comedy, and fear.

Sleep slumbers here, like a great quiet sea
Shrunk to this bottle's compass, sleep that brings
Sweet respite from the teeth of pain
To those poor tossing things
That the white nurses watch so thoughtfully.
And here again
Dwell the shy souls of Maytime flowers
That shall make sweeter still those poignant hours
When wide-eyed youth looks on the face of love.
And, for those others who have found too late
The bitter fruit thereof,
Here are cosmetics, powders, paints—the arts
That hunted women use to hunt again
With scented flesh for bait.
And here is comfort for the hearts
Of sucking babes in their first teething pain.
Here dwells the substance of huge fervid dreams,
Fantastic, many-colored, shot with gleams
Of ecstasy and madness, that shall come
To some pale twitching sleeper in a bunk.
And here is courage, cheaply bought
To cure a sick blue funk,
And dearly paid for in the final sum.
Here in this powdered fly is caught
Desire more ravishing than Tarquin's, rape
And bloody-handed murder. And at last
When the one weary hope is past
Here is the sole escape,
The little postern in the house of breath
Where pallid fugitives keep tryst with death.

All this the drug clerk knows, and there he stands,
Young and dapper, debonair . . .
He rests a pair of slender hands,
Much manicured, upon the counter there
And speaks: "No, we don't carry no pomade.
We only cater to the high-class trade."

Imprisoned

I have walked always in a veil.
A clinging shroud encircles me,
Steel-strong, yet yielding, and too frail
For any eye to see.

No blow can rend it, and no knife
Can slash the subtle formless thing.
It shuts me in with my own life
Past hope or questioning.

If I reach out my hand to touch
Some meeting hand of god or man,
The veil gives backward just so much
As my arm's length can span.

I cannot hope to loose its hold
Till I am free of transient suns.
I grow more separate in its fold
With every year that runs.

And yet I cannot be content.
I cry out like a lonely child;
I struggle, but my strength is spent;
I am not reconciled.

Oh, brother, whom I cannot reach,
Not willingly I pass you by!
My heart is clumsy, and my speech,
But, brother, hear my cry!

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

Llewellyn, Prince Of Cambria

A WELSH BALLAD

Llewellyn stood at his palace door,
And a frown was on his face.
"Farewell," he cried to his new-wed bride,
Farewell for a little space!

"Sith you deny me a dole of love
For the gift of my princely name,
I'm forth to seek me a love that will,
Though it be a love of shame."

Llewellyn he turned from his palace gate,
Went over the hills away;
He ate of the deer, he drank of the stream
For many a livelong day.

Llewellyn rose from his bed of leaves
One morn when the mists were red,
And he was ware of a woman's form
Stood high on a cliff o'erhead.

This woman was clad in the dun deer-skin,
But one white breast was bare,
And kilted was she above the knee,
And loose was her red-gold hair.

The sun rose behind her out of the east,
And she glowed like a flame of fire,
And she stretched her arms toward Llewellyn there
Till he trembled with sweet desire.

Then up lept he right wantonly
And ran to her where she stood,
But she waved her hand, and turned and fled
Through the dark of the tangled wood.

The woman ran and Llewellyn ran
Through bush and meadow and brake,
O'er many a craggy mountain-ridge,
Round many a quiet lake.

And twice when Llewellyn stopped to breathe
In the heat of the breathless noon
The woman turned and looked at him
Till his strong heart reeled in a swoon.

They ran all day and they ran at eve
By the light of the first wan star,
For Llewellyn followed her red-gold hair
That gleamed in the dusk afar.

They came at length to a narrow glen
Where the cliff rose sheer overhead.
The woman she sank in a huddled heap
And hid her face as in dread.

Llewellyn came up and looked at her
While her panting shoulders heaved,
He heard the sob of her deep-drawn breath,
And his heart was well-nigh grieved.

"Oh prize that the speed of my feet hath won,
Come yield with a right good grace!
You wakened my love, you may still my love.—
Turn round and show your face!"

She answered him, and her voice was low,
But welcome unto his ear;
"What vow will you vow if I turn to you,
For my bosom is faint with fear.

"If you would have me to show my face
And yield to you frank and free,
You must pass your troth you never will bed
With woman unless with me.

"If you would master a woman's love,
You must yield to a woman's pride,
For I have a knife within my hand
That else will pierce my side."

Llewellyn raised the cross of his glaive
And a mighty vow made he:
"Be God my help as I keep this troth,
If you will but yield to me!"

The woman laughed with a bitter laugh:
"A mighty oath you make;
But you vowed as deep to your wedded wife,
And now that vow you would break."

"If I vowed as deep to my wedded wife,
'Twas my father that bade me to;
But now I have won a bride of my own,
And my vow to her is true."

She has turned her round, she has shown her face
On the greensward where she lay;
And he has kneeled him to look on her,
For the evening light was grey.

He has seen the eyes of his own sweet wife,
He has seen her red mouth smile.
He has bowed his head to the dewy grass
And cried, "Woe worth the while!

"For I am shamed that I did not know
The fairest woman alive,
But treated her ill and spoke her harsh
Because I was forced to wive."

She has drawn his body into her arms,
Has kissed him on cheek and brow;
"Sith you have won a bride of your own,
Be faithful to your vow."

"What made you refuse my love before,
If now you love me so,
And why did you stain your black, black hair
A hue that I could not know?"

"Oh the love of yours I refused before
Was a love a woman would scorn,
For the love of yours I refused before
Was a love whence hate is born.

"And I did stain my black, black hair
And put off my robes of pride
That you might strive as never you strove
Ere you won me for your bride.

"For the love that falls like fruit from the tree
Will lightly be thrown away,
But the love that is bought with a man's whole strength
Will haply last for aye."

She drew his breast to her bosom then,
His lips unto hers she drew;
"You have vowed your vow, you have won me now,
And I will yield to you."

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

A Painter in New England

Did you ever note the beauty of the soft New England grasses,
All the ochres, reds and browns;
And the flowers: the purple asters and the goldenrod's rich masses
With the cardinals' flaming gowns,
Dots of blood against the tangle of the reedy lone morasses
Where the nodding cat-tails rustle under every wind that passes?
Ah! what reticent depth of color,
Growing brighter, growing duller,
As a smile of sunlight broadens or a gloomy storm-cloud frowns.

Have you read the blazoned glory of the sunset's revelations,
Glowing scarlet streaked with gold;
Or observed the crumbling sky-towers cleft by radiant fulgurations,
Ruins gorgeous to behold?
While the East is hung with tapestries in dove-serene gradations
And the naked vault of heaven is touched with vivid variations,
Where in all the world resplendent
Or the poet's mind transcendent
Can such miracles be imaged, form so grand or hue so bold?

Have you watched the dreamy progress of a gray New England schooner
Drifting seaward with the tide
Darkly down a line of radiance, dawn-bright gold or silvery lunar,
Ribbon narrow or ocean wide?
Such a boat in such a background I will paint you ten times sooner
Than a lily-perfect yacht with drooping topsail and ballooner.
No, for me the old-time vessel
In a land-locked bay to nestle
Till the light breeze flaps her stay-sail and the light wave laps her side.

Have you shrunk before the grimness of the rugged 'longshore ledges
Where the groundswell surf rolls in
Round the battlemented coast-line with its walls and bastion wedges?
Hark! the cave-resounded din
As a breaker smites the granite with the strength of giant sledges
And a swaying fringe of foam enfolds the dark cliff's dripping edges.
Readily will other nations
Yield a sheaf of sharp sensations,
But the landscape of New England holds a rapture hard to win.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

To Edward MacDowell

(ON ATTEMPTING TO PLAY ONE OF HIS COMPOSITIONS)

Speak to me, master, more plainly, plainly,
Breathe your meaning across the chords.
I falter and feel toward it vainly, vainly,
But half divining your mystic words.

Sweet is the message and airy, airy,
Subtle as perfumes of flowers unseen.
Eager I follow yet wary, wary,
Tasting enchanted the fragrance keen.

Rapt are my senses and drifting, drifting
Over the waste of the lone mid-sea,
Eastward the young moon lifting, lifting,
Silvers the waves with its witchery.

While from afar calls broken, broken,
Music more soft than the sea's soft hiss,
Luring with thoughts unspoken,—spoken,
Stealing the soul with a dream-felt kiss.—

Thanks to you, master, who kindly, kindly
Breathed your meaning across the chords,
Now I may speak nor blindly, blindly
Falter the sense of your magic words.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

Personality

All that I write is stained with my heart's hue;
And yet it is not mine, some loftier power
Has steeped my thought before it met your view
In curving leaf and variegated flower.
The sun pours life into a thousand forms,
But though that glorious ardor be the same
In every tiniest leaf its effluence warms,
Men give to each new plant its separate name.
So with divine omnipotence the sun
Of Love shines freely on a myriad seeds,
And, though the source of radiance be but one,
They thrill diversely into blossoming deeds.
One flower is red, another one is blue;
This is called "I," and yonder one is "You."

Trails

A trail's a careless human sort of thing,
Much like a casual turn of speech. Altho
You can't tell who began it or just why
It wanders here or there, still if you're set
To go somewhere, you'll mostly find a trail.

You think it's like
An unsophisticated country girl,
Confiding; who, taking your hand in hers,
With lifted eyes and berry-pouting lips,
Will lead you guilelessly. All it wants,
You think, is to reveal perchance a glade
Eager with fireweed; and soft nets of fern;

A lichened log; a shallow rivulet,
Brown over mud, but crystal over beds
Of pebbles, where its tiny wavelets crisp
To silver in the laughter-dimpling lights.
So you drift heedlessly, until you strike
A slope. You clamber up the jagged steps
Of a pink cliff of granite, quickly cross
A smooth stretch under boughs of stunted pines,
But then meet other crags to scale, with tufts
Of blueberries or of bristling juniper,
When with a great lift of the lungs and soul
You leap out on a summit, breast to breast
With the great clouds that melt in softest blue,
While far below the dim earth lies a-dream
In veils of violet haze, and off to the east
The titan ocean spreads his purple cloak
Broidered with runic islands.

You know the trail deceived you with its air
Of shy rusticity; you're in love, in love—
You that went out but for an idle walk—
Madly in love with the informing soul
Of what you gaze on!
That was where the trail
Led you. Do you forgive it?

VIOLA C. WHITE

Via Obscura

I seek, with those who roam afar from light,
The moon's face never turned; the under snow;
The circle just outside the lantern glow
Rustling with wings and wet with forest night;
The streets that run obliquely from the sight
Of peering sunshine to an antique row
Where pilèd armor, bowl, and censer show
The smouldering dreams of monk and sybarite.

I seek the coverts of the human mind,
Beyond its false and simple masquerade,
That pasture irony and half-desire;
The caves where wind of daylight never strayed;
The black and brooding mines, wherein I find
The fundamental origin of fire.

RIDGELY TORRENCE

Three O'Clock
(*Morning*)

The jewel-blue electric flowers
  Are cold upon their iron trees.
Upraised, the deadly harp of rails
  Whines for its interval of ease.
The stones keep all their daily speech
  Buried, but can no more forget
Than would a water-vacant beach
  The hour when it was wet.

A whitened few wane out like moons,
    Ghastly, from some torn edge of shade;
A drowsing one, a reeling one,
    And one still loitering after trade.
On high the candour of the clock
    Portions the dark with solemn sound.
The burden of the bitten rock
    Moans up from underground.

Far down the streets a shutting door
    Echoes the yesterday that fled
Among the days that should have been,
    Which people cities of the dead.
The banners of the steam unfold
    Upon the towers to meet the day;
The lights go out in red and gold,
    But Time goes out in grey.

RIDGELY TORRENCE

The Son

SOUTHERN OHIO MARKET TOWN

I heard an old farm-wife,
    Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
    And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
    We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
    We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushel at sixty cents,
    It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
    He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
    His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
    But the harvest early."

The Apples

The world is wasted with fire and sword
But the apples of gold hang over the sea.

When the wounded seaman heard the ocean-daughters,
    With their dreamy call,
Lull the stormy demon of the waters,
    He remembered all.

He remembered knowing of an island charted;
"Past a flying fire."
Where a fruit was growing, winey-hearted,
Called "the mind's desire."

Near him broke the stealing rollers into jewels
Round a tree and there
Sorrow's end and healing, peace, renewals
Ripened in the air.

So he knew he'd found it and he watched the glory
Burning on the tree
With the dancers round it, like the story,
In the swinging sea.

Lovely round the honey-colored fruit the motion
Made a leafy stir,
Songs were in that sunny tree of ocean
Where the apples were.

First the ocean sung them, then the daughters after,
Dancing to the word,
Beauty danced among them with low laughter
And the harp was heard.

In that sea's immeasurable music sounded
Songs of peace and still
From the bough the treasure hung down rounded
To the seamen's will.

Redder than the jewel-seeded beach and sharper
    Were the wounds he bore
Hearing past the cruel dark a harper
    Lulling on the shore.

Long he watched the wonders ringed with lovely perils,
    Watched the dancers gleam
In the sleepy thunders on the beryls,
    Then he breathed his dream:

"Bloody lands and flaming seas and cloudy slaughter,
    "Hateful fogs unfurled,
"Steely horror shaming sky and water
    "These have wreathed the world;"

"Give me fruit for freighting till my anchor grapples
    "Home beyond the vast;
"Earth shall end her hating through the apples
    "And be healed at last."

Then the sea girls lifting up their voices
    With the secret word,
Sang it through the drifting ocean noises
    And the seaman heard.

Ocean-old the answers reached his failing sinew,
    Touched, unveiled his eyes;
"Beach and bough and dancers are within you,
    "There the island lies."

"Though the heavens harden, though the thunders hover,
"Though our song be mute,
"Burning in our garden for the lover
"Still abides the fruit."

Outward from that shore the happy sailor turning
Passed the fleets of sleep,
Passed his pain and bore the secret, burning,
Homeward to the deep.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

A Cyprian Woman: Greek Folk Song

Under dusky laurel leaf,
    Scarlet leaf of rose,
I lie prone, who have known
    All a woman knows.

Love and grief and motherhood,
    Fame and mirth and scorn,
These are all shall befall
    Any woman born.

Jewel-laden are my hands,
    Tall my stone above—
Do not weep that I sleep,
    Who was wise in love:

Where I walk a shadow grey
    Through grey asphodel,
I am glad, who have had
    All that Life could tell.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

The Factories

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing-time was done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from Love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sun-lit dark?
I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest—
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD

La Gitana

None of the girls of Ronda have feet as fine as mine,
That glimmer and glance through the whirl of the dance as fireflies blaze and shine,
Seen in some shadowy rambla outside of a gay café.
None of the girls in Ronda can dance down death, my way.

Carmen and fat Conchita can sell themselves for shoes,
Black as their souls with the heels of red, such as the Cubans use.
They can sell themselves for their stockings, their spider webs of silk,
And their feet like their brows are brazen, but mine are white as milk.

For mine was a Northern mother my gypsy father found
In a brothel in Biscaya. And love in drink he drowned.
So I grew up in the gutter, slinking and wild to be
Alone, alive, in the open, sunlit, and flushed and free,
Naked in running rivers. So I must dance today
Where the eyes of the men are upon my face and flesh like beasts of prey.

And the tongues of the tawdry women they tear my life apart
And they smear my name with their women's shame as their teeth would tear my heart,

As they'd rip the flesh away from my face and the bodice
from my breasts.
And the wave of life is around me. I am lifted on its crests.
I am lifted high on its surges; and the light it lends my eyes
Is the strength of moon and sunrise and the splendor of the
skies.
I am caged in their snarling city, but between its shadowy
bars
I see the loom of tomorrow and the altar lights of stars.
Savage, violent, virgin; like a trainer in their cage,
They snarl at my looks like lashes, these women marred with
age,
These men that my mind has mastered; and I rule their
restless lives
With my feet that flicker through shadows like the bickering
light of knives.

I dance and they bow before me. Barefoot I turn, I tread
On the throbbing hearts of the living and the ashes of the
dead.
I dance till I stop, where he stands apart, till I hold his love
and hate:
Master and man and the bravest heart, sultan and slave and
mate.

ELINOR WYLIE

Nebuchadnezzar

My body is weary to death of my mischievous brain;
I am weary forever and ever of being brave;
Therefore I crouch on my knees while the cool white rain
Curves the clover over my head like a wave.

The stem and the frosty seed of the grass are ripe;
I have devoured their strength; I have drunk them deep;
And the dandelion is gall in a thin pipe,
But the clover is honey and sun and the smell of sleep.

Peregrine

Liar and bragger,
He had no friend
Except a dagger
And a candle-end;
The one he read by,
The one scared cravens;
And he was fed by
The prophet's ravens.
Such haughty creatures
Avoid the human;
They fondle nature's
Breast, not woman;

A she-wolf's puppies,
A wild-cat's pussy-fur.
Their stirrup-cup is
The pride of Lucifer.
A stick he carried,
Slept in a lean-to;
He'd never married
And he didn't mean to.
He'd tried religion
And found it pleasant.
He relished a pigeon
Stewed with a pheasant
In an iron kettle;
He built stone ovens;
He'd never settle
In any province.
He made pantries
Of Vaux and Arden,
And the village gentry's
Kitchen-garden.
Fruits within yards
Were his staples;
He drank whole vineyards
From Rome to Naples,
Then went to Brittany
For the cider.
He could sit any
Horse, a rider
Out-stripping Chaeron's
Canter and gallop.
Pau's environs,

The pubs of Salop,
Wells and Bath inns,
Shared his pleasure
With taverns of Athens.
The Sultan's treasure
He'd seen in Turkey;
He'd known London
Bright and murky.
His bones were sunned on
Paris benches
Beset by sparrows;
Roman trenches,
Cavemen's barrows,
He liked, impartial;
He liked an Abbey.
His step was martial;
Spent and shabby
He wasn't broken;
A dozen lingoes
He must have spoken.
As a king goes
He went, not minding
That he lived seeking
And never finding.
He'd visit Peking
And then be gone soon
To the far Canaries;
He'd cross a monsoon
To chase vagaries.
He loved a city
And the street's alarums;

Parks were pretty
And so were bar-rooms.
He loved fiddles;
He talked with rustics;
Life was riddles
And queer acrostics.
His sins were serried;
His virtues garish;
His corpse was buried
In a country parish.
Before he went hence—
God knows where—
He spoke this sentence
With a princely air;
"The noose draws tighter;
This is the end;
I'm a good fighter
But a bad friend;
I've played the traitor
Over and over;
I'm a good hater
But a bad lover."

Parting Gift

I cannot give you the Metropolitan Tower;
I cannot give you heaven;
Nor the nine Visigoth crowns in the Cluny Museum;
Nor happiness, even.

But I can give you a very small purse
Made out of field-mouse skin,
With a painted picture of the universe
And seven blue tears therein.

I cannot give you the island of Capri;
I cannot give you beauty;
Nor bake you marvelous crusty cherry pies
With love and duty.
But I can give you a very little locket
Made out of wildcat hide:
Put it into your left-hand pocket
And never look inside.

Heroics

Though here and there a man is left
Whose iron thread eludes the shears,
The martyr with his bosom cleft
Is dead these seven heavy years.

Does he survive whose tongue was slit,
To slake some envy of a king's?
Sportive silver cried from it
Before the savage cut the strings.

The rack has crumpled up the limb
Stretched immediate to fly;
Never ask the end of him
Stubborn to outstare the sky.

Assuming an heroic mask,
He stands a tall derisive tree,
While servile to the speckled task
We moved devoted hand and knee

It is no virtue, but a fault
Thus to breathe ignoble air,
Suffering unclean assault
And insult dubious to bear.

Castilian

Velasquez took a pliant knife
And scraped his palette clean;
He said, "I lead a dog's own life
Painting a king and queen."

He cleaned his palette with oily rags
And oakum from Seville wharves;
"I am sick of painting painted hags
And bad ambiguous dwarfs."

The sky is silver, the clouds are pearl,
Their locks are looped with rain.
I will not paint Maria's girl
For all the money in Spain."

He washed his face in water cold,
His hands in turpentine;

He squeezed out colour like coins of gold
And colour like drops of wine.

Each colour lay like a little pool
On the polished cedar wood;
Clear and pale and ivory-cool
Or dark as solitude.

He burnt the rags in the fireplace
And leaned from the window high;
He said, "I like that gentleman's face
Who bears his cap awry."

This is the gentleman, there he stands,
Castilian, sombre-caped,
With arrogant eyes, and narrow hands
Miraculously shaped.

WILLARD WATTLES

Jericho

Jericho, Jericho,
Round and round the walls I go
Where they watch with scornful eyes,
Where the captained bastions rise;
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Blithely round the walls I go.

Jericho, Jericho,
Round and round the walls I go . . .
All the golden ones of earth
Regal in their lordly mirth . . .
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Round and round the walls I go.

Jericho, Jericho,
Blithely round the walls I go,
With a broken sword in hand
Where the mighty bastions stand;
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Hear my silly bugle blow.

Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Round the walls of Jericho . . .
Past the haughty golden gate

Where the emperor sat in state
Smiles to see the ragged show
Round and round the towers go.

Jericho, Jericho,
Round and round and round I go . . .
All their sworded bodies must
Lie low in their towers' dust . . .
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Blithely round the walls I go.

Heel and toe, heel and toe,—
I will blow a thunder note
From my brazen bugle's throat
Till the sand and thistle know
The leveled walls of Jericho,
Jericho, Jericho, Jericho. . . . . .

Return

Wise man, wise man,
Fingers and thumbs,
Which is the way
That Jesus comes?

Wise man, wise man,
Rabbi, priest,
Did you ever see a man
On such a poor beast?

Wise man, wise man,
I saw a lame child;
And when he came by
Jesus smiled.

Jesus, Jesus,
How do you come?
"To those who are halt
And blind and dumb."

My knee was sprung
And I couldn't see,
So I climbed up high
In a jujube tree.

Jesus, Jesus,
What are you worth?
"The sun and the moon
And the little round earth."

Jesus, Jesus,
Sing me a song.
"I can't stop now,
For the road's too long."

Jesus, Jesus,
Go along, Lord;
My knee is straight
As the governor's sword.

Jesus, Jesus,
Go along before
To a high house
With a silver door.

But I'll stop first
To clean my feet,
And then sit down
By the chimney-seat.

And Jesus will laugh
And say it's good
That I've moved into
His neighborhood.

When he lights his pipe
I think he'll scratch
The Morning-Star
For his safety match.

We'll drink all night
From a good brown cup,
And not go to bed
Till the sun comes up.

Wise man, wise man,
Fingers and thumbs,
This is the way
That Jesus comes.

The Encomium

(Taken from the end of a masque, "The Woodland Altar," written for the use of the chapters of The MacDowell Colony League.)

There is a place where Beauty, Peace and Silence
Throng the deep woods with dryad presences,
Where in the hush of slow serenity
Fortunate men see visions, face to face,
Where lightfoot hours hold Time within their hands
And let the sun pour down his gold uncounted.

Here each man hath his "House of Dreams untold,"
His jewelled dreams to carry back again
In fantasy, in color, or in song,
Back to a world grown dusty for their lack.
Lingers the silken murmur of the pines,
Ripples the brook, and gleams the shifting sky
Within their chords, or dances down their script.

Herein nor Cark nor Care shall ever come,
Nor small and testy trivialities
Lay waste the hours nor drive the dreams away.
Silence unshattered and pervading Peace
Stand at the lintel of each lonely door
Guarding the brooding dreamer and his dream.

In those dark days when men no more see visions,
May there be sanctuary in the hills,
Still may there be the place the Master loved,—
That wooded westering slope where echoed once
His harmonies,—oh, never may that air
Be empty of all music! And forever,
Haunting those heights, shall walk the Seven Arts!

ESTHER WILLARD BATES.

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